A MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF
ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

L. D. SERIES 47

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DALSUKH MALVANIA

BY
KALIDAS BHATTACHARYYA
EX-VICE-CHANCELLOR
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FOREWORD

The L. D. Institute of Indology has great pleasure in publishing the three lectures on 'A Modern Understanding of Advaita Vedānta', delivered by Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharyya in L. D. Lecture Series in February, 1974. They were first printed in our Journal Sambodhi Vol. III.

Studens and Scholars have fascination for Advaita Vedānta which is a profound system of Indian philosophy. In these lectures the learned Doctor explains lucidly some fundamental aspects of Advaita Vedānta. He expounds the Advaita Vedānta conceptions through modern acceptable idioms. One will surely be impressed by his constructive interpretations and acute analytical intellect. He raises pertinent questions and answers them logically and sympathetically. Here one will have glimpses of the Logic of Advaita Vedānta.

I am thankful to Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharyya for these three lectures which he prepared at our instance. I have no doubt that the students, teachers and others interested in this subject will find this book interesting and of genuine help in understanding Advaita Vedānta.

L. D. Institute of Indology
Ahmedabad-9
15th April 1975

Dalsukh Malvania

PREFACE

The text embodies the few lectures I delivered on Advaita Vedānta in 1974 at the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad. I am grateful to the Director of the Institute, Pt. D. D. Malvania, for his having kindly invited me to deliver these lectures and equally grateful for his arranging their publication in the form of a small book.

All transcendental philosophy – often called metaphysics – is a guarded presentation of a sort of experience which has for its content something beyond Nature, 'Nature' meaning what is in space and/or time and governed by the law of causation. True, such experience can never be adequately described, which means that no one who does not already have that experience can form any clear or complete idea of it from that description. But there are two ways of escape from this difficulty. One of these is that the presentation may be *guarded,* which in its turn means three things : (i) part of the presentation is clear, definite and true to facts – I mean that part which, for whatever reason, is concerned directly with *normal* experience, (ii) the remaining part is clearly shown as logically *inferred* from this part (i), and (iii) the remaining part is as clearly stated as one in such predicament is capable of stating it. This is the first way of escape from the difficulty mentioned above. The second way of escape, not denying that every statement should be as clear and definite *as possible,* is, for one who states his supernatural experience, to go on offering inevitable *suggestions* at every crucial turn of the description and, for the hearer, to pick them up cleverly and follow them authentically in his own experience. In my lectures I have played the role of the hearer.

The first of the ways of escape is the way of *logical* (conceptual) philosophy, and the second is philosophy as living experince dominant throughout. Only, in the second case the experience, though quite definite so far as it is *present* experience, is also half indefinite in so far as it *anticipates* – authentically though, but in a *new depth–dimension* of one's definite present experience, – a series of further experiences *to be had* one after another in that new dimension. The whole series of experience in that new dimension is, again, indefinite not only because the experience is only *to be had*, i. e. not already there but also because there is no *conceptual* clarity either about it. And yet the series is undeniable because it has been suggested inevitably. Experience is not exhausted in (i) what is definitely present experience and (ii) what is *conceptually* definite, i. e. logically inferred. *Suggestion* also is experience of a sort and quite

authentic, though indefinite till now. One *has to* follow it up logically as far as possible and, *alternatively*, as a series of present experiences one after another in a new depth-dimension. Everything, however, has to be stated as far as possible in a clear language.

This second way of approach may be called *phenomenological*. In phenomenology, in other words, all present definite experience is a *problem*; and each solution,— though so far as it is a solution it is a present definite experience — presents itself as a problem in its turn, to be solved again, and so on. Whether there is a final solution—depends on whether one, in transcendental philosophizing, had started with an *ideal*, a farthest limit—however vaguely it had been operating from the beginning.

In older days in India transcendental philosophy developed in both the ways, though for whatever reason logical (conceptual) approach grew more popular in later days. Except for those later days, in earlier India there was a beautiful blend of both the approaches. There was neither excessive logical phiosophy nor baffling all-round mysticism.

In my lectures on Advaita Vedānta I have proceeded along this balanced phenomenological line. Also in my understanding of Advaita Vedānta I have tried to profit as much as possible by whatever knowledge I have of Western philosophy. I strongly feel that no constructive philosophy in modern India can thrive unless one has studied both western and old-day Indian philosphy and tried to revive old Indian thoughts through modern acceptable idioms as far as possible and then developed lines of divergence which, fortunately or unfortunately, are plentiful.

To anyone who is conversant with K. C. Bhattacharyya's thoughts my profound indebtedness to him will be more than apparent. What I have done is really presenting his thoughts, definitely ill-understood by me at places, in my own way.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to my elderly pupil Manoranjan Basu from whom I have in recent years learnt much of Tantra *vis-a-vis* Advaita Vedānta and K. C. Bhattacharyya's thoughts.

I wish I could revise the lectures in the light of the points raised by my listeners at Ahmedabad and elsewhere. But I desist. I have a mind to write another book in the light of these points, and including other aspects of Advaita Vedānta, later.

Kalidas Bhattacharyya

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CHAPTER I

THE ABSOLUTE AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

A

Essence and accident taken together, the person called 'I' is an individual unit consisting of a body, a mind and what will be shown as its essential presupposition—pure subjectivity, called also pure consciousness. Not that the particular body and mind and that pure consciousness remain side by side in clear distinction, nor as even half distinct from one another, from the beginning. It is given as almost a homogeneous unity, from out of which the three, with all the sub-stages involved, are only progressively distinguished out through a sort of deepening of reflection, much as what happens when *forms* are distinguished from out of a given situation. In a given situation, at the unreflective level, neither forms nor the residuary matter stand distinguished, even so much as half distinguished; and when subtler forms progressively unfold themselves in their respective autonomy — autonomy implying that the forms discovered at each stage can be imagined and tackled by themselves—every lower stage is, from the point of view of this distinguishing, understood as one where the form had stood undistinguishedly fused, and the residuary matter = the-fused-state-*minus*-the-form-distinguished appears as never realizable in its autonomy but only as *indefinite*, speakable only in terms of the form distinguished — as what the form *is not* — its positivity (not denied) being only spoken of as a dark indefinite positive base which that form had somehow been dragged into and fused with. In other words, phenomenologically, matter as such is but the self-negation

of form, and whatever positivity it has is only that of the unreflective given situation which just *was* positive, there being no question as to why it was so. The relation between body and the world, between mind and body and between pure consciousness and mind has to be understood in the same manner. This is unlike any ordinary case of distinguishing where when *X* is distinguished out the remainder is understood as a clear positive definite *Y* equivalent to the given situation *minus X*. Dissociation of the stages of freedom, as thus of a different sort, can be best represented by saying that what is now dissociated had earlier, by an inscrutable act of self-negation, deformed itself positively as the given that was started from. This is the Advaita principle of *ajñāna* details of which, however, will be taken up later.

The given that is started from is the ordinary world of things. What is first distinguished out of it, as more subjective and, therefore, free so far, is one's body. Body which is otherwise a thing among things of the world called Nature or world of objects *(jaḍa)* is yet in a way not in it. Somehow it enjoys a priviledged position. If the world is an *object* of experience to a *subject* that experiences it, body as the *medium* of this experience finds a distinct position for itself which is as much in that world of objects as not in it. When an object finds itself to be a medium (means), to that extent it transcends the world and feels drawn toward the subject that uses it as a means. As a matter of fact, in that aspect it is felt as *I*, which is never the lot of any other physical thing of the world. Other things of the world can at most be *mine*, never felt as *I*. Being in the world, the body equally transcends it.

This relative subjectivity of body is evident in other ways too. The absolute distance and direction of everything and, for that very reason, their distances and directions in relation to one another are due ultimately to the reference of each to my body; and add to this the more intriguing phenomenon that my body is not a mere point—and, what is still more

intriguing, that even its different parts have distances and directions relatively to one another—and what it all points to is that when this body is considered as the centre of all reference it is somehow understood as other than a spatial object, though there is no denial at the same time of its being in the space of the world. It follows that space in which body finds itself is itself to be understood in some necessary reference to the body that is so far non-spatial. Not merely that; anything that is called 'this' is so only in relation to my body, and as this body too is often called 'this' there is no escape from the phenomenological conclusion that it is subjective relatively to every thing of the world. The so-called *objective this* is only another name of the *self-identity* of the thing miscalled that way and falling considerably short of the full meaning of the term, the full meaning being 'present before me'.[1] Body, in short, is as much in the space we perceive as not in it. Phenomenologically, this is more evident when it is a question of body as felt from within.[2]

Mental status (*vṛttis*, better, *antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*) come next to be distinguished in their freedom from this bodily subjectivity. They are the states of cognition, feeling and will[3] that are not only felt as somehow dissociate from the corresponding objects—somehow standing at a distance—but also known that way explicitly when we introspect.[4] There

1 The so-called objective space with fixed positions, distances and directions of objects in a conceptual construction, a logical device.

2 *Vide* K. C. Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. II, 'Subject as Freedom', Chapter III, ed. Gopinath Bhattacharyya, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta. Indeed to K. C. Bhattacharyya I am indebted for all the central ideas developed in these chapters.

3 Unconscious traces (*saṁskāras*) as never intuitively distinguishable we keep apart.

4 Except, of course, in the case of *perception* where the mental and the physical coalesce. To introspection into perception there is no *percept* as a presentation other than the object perceived. Something like a mental percept is distinguished when an illusion is detected

may be an order of relative subjectivity among them, and each of these may have phases relatively more toward the subject than others. But these questions we may ignore for the present. The main point here is that the mental is more subjective than the bodily. That mental states have a sort of subjectivity which is freer than that of body is almost universally recognised. If the behaviourists and others of their kin demur, let them note, first, that body itself is either mine or yours or his, and often even felt as *I*, *you*, or *he*, which is not necessarily the story of other things of the world, and, secondly, that though many statements of peculiar mental occurrences and behaviours can be reduced to ones that need not mean these, this does not affect other simpler statements which are not so reducible. Whether these simpler statements point or not to existent mental states as qualitatively different from physical ones depends entirely on the theory of meaning one upholds. Like most Indian thinkers, the Advaitin upholds the commonsense theory of meaning which is that whatever is spoken of in a way exists exactly that way, unless in particular specific cases there are reasons to the contrary.

These states are mental, but they are *objects* at the same time. Felt, in themselves, as relatively more subjective than either body or physical things, they are yet experienced as objects to, and discovered too that way by, introspection *(anuvyavasāya)*[5] or mental perception *(mānasa-pratyakṣa)*, as the case may be, quite in the same way as things of the world

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as an illusion. Yet the illusory detected as illusory is not wholly dissociated from the space in which other things are. As corrected, it is indeed no longer assertable to be in that space—it cannot be asserted as the resident of the ordinary world—and yet, even then, its to be in that space, to be a resident of the ordinary world—is not wholly denied either.

5 This is what is called introspection in ordinary psychological literature. Very soon we shall be speaking of quite another sort of introspection which, as distinct from psychological introspection, will be called spiritual introspection (*sākṣi-jñāna*).

re experienced in—and one may add, though unnecessarily, 'as discovered that way by'—the primary first order cognition. Mental states which are primary cognitions are said to be objects to *introspection*, and other states which are non-cognitive—feelings and wills, for example—are objects for mental perception. There is, of course, a difference of opinion among the Advaitins regarding whether mental perception is itself a case of introspection or not.

Mental states are objects. Yet, not only as experienced at the primary unreflective stage but even discovered by introspection, they evince relative freedom, forming a class apart from other things of the world and also from body. When I am introspectively aware of my cognition of *X*, where that *X* is a thing of the world, no doubt that *X* too appears before the introspection, but that it does only as loosely attached to that cognition, tending all the while to slip from it, attention being focussed more on the cognition side than on it; and what all this means is that the mental side not only demands a sort of freedom but has actually half attained it. We may feel more assured of this if we distinguish this act of introspection from another of its kind where, instead of being aware of the cognition-of-an-object, we are aware rather of the object-as-cognised. The object in this latter case stands more in the focus and cognition hangs on to it adjectivally in order just to bring to the focus of reflection characters of the object that were not noticed before.

If this latter type of reflection is also called 'introspection' as it has been by some, it would be introspection of a new kind altogether. It is either merely a better, though second-level, cognition of the very object of the first level, with some of its features now revealed for the first time—in which case it is widely different from what we normally understand by the term 'introspection', being similar to that only in so far as it is reflective, *or* it would mean mere abstraction of the *knownness* of the object that was known, asserting that known-

ness as only a property of the object. In the former case the very use of the term 'introspection' might be questioned, but in the latter case the use is not illegitimate because, after all, this awareness is one of knownness. But, then, the object of this awareness, the knownness of the object of primary cognition, is not revealed as subjective relatively to that earlier object, not revealed, in other words, as livingly dissociated from that object. The only introspection that reveals its object as yet relatively subjective that way is the awareness of my primary *cognition* of an object, where the distinctive object of the introspection is that *cognition* (not that object), though with its erstwhile object somehow both hanging on and slipping. This sense of the object of the primary cognition somehow both hanging on and slipping is precisely what we mean when we say that the cognition is being livingly dissociated from that object and so far standing as subjective relatively to it. The introspection that does not reveal this relative subjectivity of the primary cognition may be called psychological introspection *(anuvyavasāya)*, the type of introspection we find spoken of in common psychological literature. The type of introspection which, on the other hand, reveals that relative subjectivity of the cognition introspected may, in contrast, be called spiritual introspection[6] (*sākṣin*). It may be noted in passing that the reflective awareness of an object (not of its cognition)—apparently introspection of the first type—need not always refer to that object through the intervention of an intermediary like knownness or primary cognition: though reflective, it may refer straight to the object of the primary level. When there is such straight reference, reflective awareness is, in reality, introspection of the spiritual type (*sākṣin*). The illusory snake, for example, detected as illusory, is known straight, though reflectively. Reflective knowledge of snake *as illusory snake*, which is the same thing as the retrospective account of what it is in the original experience,

6 *Vide* K. C. Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. II. 'Subject as Freedom', Chapters I and II.

is taken as of the nature of spiritual introspection because, known as illusory or having been illusory, it is not so far known retrospectively as having been an object like other independent objects—and so far, one may say, though not correctly, as having been subjective—though its erstwhile experienced objectivity is not also explicitly denied. The retrospective reflective awareness of the illusory snake as having been illusory is to be called spiritual introspection for another reason : like the primary cognition which is normally introspected spiritually, the object here—that illusory snake—is revealed to the *sākṣin* direct, not through the intervention of any *vṛtti*.

B

That cognition as a mental state is nearer introspection is clear from another consideration also. It is that one finds is extremely difficult to distinguish between this cognition and introspection so far as their stuff is concerned—a thing we seldom experience in our primary cognition of worldly objects where between that cognition and the objects there is a clear distinction in stuff. Not that there is no stuff-distinction whatsoever between cognition and introspection. What we emphasize here is that there is a bit too much of similarity between the two. The Advaitin holds that cognition as a mental state is made, at least predominantly, of *sattva* which not only makes it phosphorescent but also works as a bridgeway from all that is object to subjectivity proper. If feelings and willings are also phosphorescent, they too are so far made of *sattva*, but they do not claim as much nearness to introspection as cognition does. While cognition, when introspected into, shows itself as dissociate from worldly objects and from relevant bodily states and proves that way its (greater) subjectivity, feelings and willings never show themselves as dissociate to that degree : if there is any question of dissociation from worldly objects it is oblique of a sort, and from bodily states like organic sensations and general

coanaesthesia they appear to be as much free as not, perpetually alternating between freedom and fusion. Their stuff contains some dominant duller elements, called *rajas* and *tamas*.

Phosphorescence of cognition, or, for the matter of that, of any mental state, is entirely an objective property belonging to it. A cognition that is revealed to introspection as an object is revealed *ipso facto* as phosphorescent. Introspective awareness of cognition is thus widely different from its phosphorescence : introspection stands apart as subjective in relation to that phosphorescent cognition as an object. The cognition in question may indeed be subjective relatively to the thing that is cognised, but, assuredly, it is an object *vis-a-vis* introspection.

There is, however, a basic distinction, here too, between psychological and spiritual introspection. As awareness, both indeed are subjective *vis-a-vis* their objects. But because the object of psychological introspection is only *knownness* which is in no sense subjective, this type of introspection, in spite of being awareness and, so far, subjective, is *logically* as much an object too, like any cognition at the primary level. Spiritual introspection, on the other hand, dissimilar in this respect to any primary cognition, in so far as what it reveals it reveals as subjective, cannot itself be an object again to another ulterior awareness. Psychological introspection is on a par, so far, with ordinary cognitions, and one may not unreasonably claim that its existence has, therefore, to be known by another cognition which, now on a par with spiritual introspection (because its object is awareness as subjective) would refuse to be revealed by still another cognition. Spiritual introspection is self-revealing; logically, psychological introspection is not so.

It often appears that the Advaitin has taken *all* introspection to be self-revealing. If this is so, it is because he has not recognised any psychological introspection. *Anuvyavasāya*,

with him, is basically *sākṣi-jñāna*, the only difference between the two being that, because of some defect, *anuvyavasāya* is a temporary affair whereas, because of the absence of that defect, *sākṣi-jñāna* is, at least relatively, abiding.[7] More of this later. Unless otherwise specified, from now on we shall mean by 'introspection' the spiritual type only.

It may be noted that even in the absence of introspection we are aware of every primary cognition *unreflectively*. Assuredly, this unreflective awareness is more than mere phosphorescence of that cognition. For while many phosphorescent things may go unnoticed there is no case of a cognition that is not noticed immediately as it occurs even though no introspection has intervened. The whole thing may, however, be understood as follows :

Introspection not to intervene does not mean that it is not there. Introspection to intervene is no other than its showing itself *in proper form*, viz., as standing apart from the cognition as ever subjective and holding that cognition as an object; which, in turn, implies that before the said intervention it was there *in an improper form*, i.e. as undistinguishedly fused with the phosphorescent cognition. It is this undistinguished presence, called, from another angle, its reflection (*pratibimba*) on that cognition, which makes the cognition pseudo-conscious. Introspection to note it as an object is only another name for itself to be dissociated as a freer stage of subjectivity. From the point of view of dissociate introspection the primary cognition is to be under-

7 It is because of that very defect that psychological introspection (*anuvyavasāya*) fails to reveal anything except through a primary cognition (*vṛtti*) which stands directly as its object. Spiritual introspection (*sākṣi-jñāna*), on the other hand, can do this : not merely primary cognitions but illusory objects too are revealed directly by it; without the intervention of further *vṛttis*. As for *ajñānavṛtti*, it is absolutely the same as what may equally be called the object of *ajñānavṛtti*. If psychological introspection too reveals *vṛttis* direct, this is because in that aspect it is identical with spiritual introspection.

stood as its self-negation, as a symbolic representation (*nāma-rūpa*) of that pure subjectivity—as its *ābhāsa* as some Advaitins have held.[8]

While mental states are more subjective than bodily states and other objects, what is still more subjective is this introspection as freed from its fusion with those states. In a sense, it is subjectivity itself, for, unlike mental states, it is never an object to any further subjectivity. Introspection is never an object to another higher-order introspection. Why this is so we have seen in Section A. What more can be said about it is as follows :

Were introspection an object to another introspection there would be an unending series of introspection behind introspection, but no one feels that way. And if we have to stop anywhere, why not stop with the first of them ?[9] Nor can it be said that one and the same introspection folds itself into two, one looking upon the other as an object; for even then the introspection as *looking* would be felt as more of its real nature than the one *looked at*, so that the latter would only be a false double. Introspection as *spoken of* is also no genuine object. At the most it symbolizes itself as an object, its so-called objectivity being either felt as self-nullifying or understood only in the context of a past objective situation, as in retrospection. Future objective situation need not be taken into account separately, because it would here be only a projection of the past.

Genuine subjectivity of introspection can be shown in yet another way. The ultimate court of appeal for anything to prove its existence is my direct cognition of it or of any

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8 The theory known as *avacchedavāda* will be examined in another section.

9 It is only in the case of psychological introspection that, as already shown; some might claim that the first introspection is known as an object by a second introspection and that only this second introspction is wholly subjective.

of its invariable associates. But what certificate can cognition itself put forward for its own existence? It will not be enough to say that its associate—any object—is directly cognised. For no certificate is acceptable till it is itself certified. What is it, then, which certifies that there has been a cognition at all? It must be some other cognition, viz. introspection. But what if one asks for a certificate for this introspection itself? Postulation of a third cognition would here be self-defeating; for not only would there be no reason why there should not be a fourth, a fifth and so an *ad indefinitum*, there would be the further difficulty that what is sought to be certified fails of that, and, despairingly enough, just because of the indefinite regress.[10] Unless a certificate is itself certified, either by itself or by another, it fails to certify. The only way out is to hold that the second cognition, viz. introspection, is self-certifying, self-certification meaning that it is not cognised as an object by another cognition.

There may, of course, be other alternative solutions. One of these we have stated in footnote 9, p. 10. Some, again, have held that when in answer to the question 'Why X?' one replies 'Because Y' there is *in that context* no immediate question like 'Why Y?' *In that context*, therefore, Y stands accepted as a sufficient answer, though it may be questioned again in *another context* which has nothing logically to do with the present one. What it all points to is that, contexts differing, one may go on admitting introspection after introspection *ad indefinitum*. As regards the first alternative, the Advaitin would only point out that he is concerned with spiritual introspection only, not with the psychological one, and to the second alternative he would reply that for the sake of discovering the ultimate truth one should be as much questioning as one could, if only to avoid pitfalls.

Still others—the Buddhists of almost all denominations—have held that as primary cognitions themselves are self-reveal-

10 *Mulocchedikā anavasthā.*

ing we need not postulate a higher stage, call it spiritual or psychological introspection. The Advaitins, however, would here first draw a distinction, as we have seen, between the phosphorescence of a mental state and the *reflective* awareness of it as an object (though in that awareness it may be known as subjective too, to whatever extent) and then another distinction between that phosphorescence and the *unreflective* notice of the mental state and, consequently, a third distinction between this unreflective notice on the one hand and that reflective awareness on the other. These points will be thoroughly discussed in the pages to follow.

Still others hold that as there is difficulty in proving the existence of introspection it should better be understood as outside the question of existence and non-existence altogether. It should, in other words, be understood, in the Kantian or semi-Buddhist fashion, as only a logical or transcendental presupposition—as the pure *I think* that neither exists nor does not exist. The Advaita rejoinder, however, would be quite simple. Advaita would readily agree that introspection=subjectivity is qualitatively different from all the first-order primary cognition but would add that the difference is not so catastrophic as to forfeit its ontological import altogether. The difficulty in proving the existence of introspection could be avoided if only it were recognised as self-certifying. Besides in introspection, subjectivity is, as a matter of fact, experienced as existent, at least, in the form 'I am'. The translation of 'I am' into 'I=I' is not merely forced, it is gratuitous too.

Not that there is never an experience like 'I=I'. The experience of subjectivity *as an overtone* of mental states is definitely one such. An overtone is always a feature which, though experienced *along with* that of which it is an adjectival overtone, is yet understood as dissoci*able*, as *demanding* in other words some sort of autonomy, an autonomy that is at least *possible*. So far it is already semi-autonomous, though, in so far as it is not experienced as actually autonomous, it

is not also experienced as an independent *existent*. It is experienced as an adjective but understood at the same time as capable of transcending that of which it is an adjective. This is exactly what Kant meant by 'transcendental', as 'I=I', not 'I am'.

But this is not the whole story of subjectivity, nor is 'I=I' the finale of the story of dissociation. The subjectivity which is only of the form 'I=I' is just *noticed*, not known reflectively. Notice is unreflective awareness, and not even of the form 'notice *of* X', as though that X is other than the notice. The *notice* of subjectivity is but subjectivity as self-revealing, even though the whole thing is unreflective yet. Even the transcendental-ity of this subjectivity is at this stage noticed unreflectively, this mere *notice* of transcendental-ity alone justifying us in calling it an overtone.

This very notice, however, poses a further demand that the situation be explicitly, i.e. reflectively, apprehended in that form. How, otherwise, could we at all *describe* the situation as we have done above? When we have the autonomous subjectivity reflectively apprehended that way, we are introspecting—we are experiencing pure subjectivity as really dissociate, as substantively in itself, as standing aside of the mental states of which it had so long been experienced as only an overtone. This is pure subjectivity. Like the subjectivity that is just *noticed*, it too is self-revealing; only, while in the former case the subjectivity in question was revealed by itself and that was the whole story, in introspection it is revealed by itself *to itself*. The just noticed subjectivity is not revealed *to introspection*: at the unreflective stage there was no explicitly distinguished introspection, and—what is more important—when introspection intervenes, the just noticed subjectivity is found to have been identical with it, as introspection undistinguished, as introspection itself in so far as it was fused with mental states and yet semi-autonomous as an overtone.

Unlike mere unreflective notice of subjectivity, introspection is pure subjectivity experienced as distinct in itself and with an ontological status, with a being of its own, not as mere transcendental presupposition of the form 'I=I'. This is pure subjectivity, *I* experienced in its maximum dissociation. It is pure consciousness, though still the self-revealing *individual I*. The Advaitin calls it *jīvasākṣin*. In a later section it will be shown that even this subjectivity is not consciousness at its *purest* form. For the time being, however, we stop with introspection.

C

But introspection as the purest form of subjectivity is still only one of the elements of the individual person, called *I*. Why should it be, as it has been taken by the Advaitin, the sole reality of the individual person, everything else—every mental state, the body and whatever else is bodily—being all faked? The Advaitin has even gone further and held that this pure consciousness is the sole reality of the *whole world*, the only ultimate being, the only reality. What does he mean by all these?

If introspection were of the psychological type (as distinct from the spiritual), mental states as its objects, however different from physical things, would be different equally from that introspection. Like physical things, they, though qualitatively different from them, would be over there, to be just picked up and known. There would be no question of reducing them to, understanding them in terms of, introspection. These states, however short-lived, and, therefore, their whole field, called mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*), would then have to be understood as constituting the individual person quite as much as that introspection and coordinately with it. So is the case with body and bodily states too, including sensations and percepts (*indriya-vṛttis*): they would equally constitue the individual person. But if introspection proper, as we have already decided, is taken as of the spiritual type, it is just what discovers

the mental states to have been dissociated, to whatever extent, from their objects and, as subjective so far, reduced, to that extent, to introspection itself. Mental states are subjective, not because they are phosphorescent—for there are many phosphorescent things which are not subjective—but because they are found to be subjective by (spiritual) introspection. Not that they are not experienced as objective. What is demanded when introspection discovers that just in so far as they are mental they are subjective, is that this objectivity is precisely what has to be got rid of. The objectivity is no doubt experienced, but it is at the same time an experience of a demand for dissociation from it.

One could, of course, argue the other way about. One could say that it is rather the detected subjectivity which has to be got rid of. But that would be from a new stand-point altogether—the standpoint of pan-objectivism—from which even the subjectivity of introspection=pure consciousness ought to have been denied. As a matter of fact, pan-objectivists have persisted in denying it either through an altogether new interpretation of consciousness or through its simple wholesale rejection. Short of that pan-objectivist attitude, then, mental states which are experienced as dissociated from the objects they refer to have to be understood as demanding dissociation even from their own objectivity and demanding, in that context, to be identical, in the long run, with introspection itself which constitutes ultimate freedom from all that is object. This is also what introspection itself testifies to when it detects the mental states as themselves to whatever extent subjective.

The Advaitin is not for pan-objectivism. His is professedly a human philosophy, treating man somehow as the focal point for all consideration of the world and not treating him as an item along with other items of the world. Even those who understand man as such an item along with other items have to consider him as after all an evolute of a higher

order and the central distinctive feature that places him in that higher order is exactly his freedom—his capability of standing aside Nature and knowing it from outside, if not also of rearranging its items into new set-ups, man being considered in either case as, so far, a centre of subjectivity as against the whole world as a system of objects. Pan-objectivism could justify itself if, and only if, the distinctive feature of man—his subjectivity=freedom—could be denied. Few—and least of all, the Advaitins—have denied it.

Pan-objectivism rejected, there is no question of getting rid of subjectivity. There is also no conceivable possibility of subjectivity, understood as subjectivity proper, forming any sort of unity, to be called the individual person, with any object understood explicitly as object. For, subjectivity understood as subjectivity is at least its dissociation from, its not being one with, object. The only alternative left is, then, for object to be reduced to subjectivity in the way we have been suggesting. Here, in our present case, the apparent objectivity of the mental states has to be understood as what has to be transcended, the new states to be realized being that of subjectivity. This means, in effect, that the objectivity to be transcended is at its best only a symbolic construction.[11]

For the pan-objectivist, objects are independent things (*padārthas*). For man-centric philosophers, on the other hand, object (*viṣaya*) is necessarily what is perceived or imagined to be perceived. They need not deny that there are things: the minimum they intend is that object, at the lowest level, i.e. in perception, coalesces with the thing. For them, in non-perceptual knowledge object is what is only imagined to be perceived, a mental presentation somehow midway between

11 This is, of course, from the point of view of subjectivity as *knowledge*. If, as by some philosophers, it is understood as (transcendental) will, the mental states—and, therefore, everything that is at any lower level—have to be understood as *created* by that will. The Advaitin has not understood it as will. At the transcendent level he reduces will to knowledge.

the thing and cognition, somehow dissociate like image as in memory and idea or meaning as in thought. Even a percept is found half dissociate in the case of illusion detected as illusion. Only, there the percept, not asserted to be there in the world of things, is somehow also not denied to be there. The illusory snake is felt as *half* dissociate from the real rope. Thus, from the man-centric point of view object everywhere is necessarily *to the knower*, though in the case of perception it coalesces also with the thing; and while in illusion, detected as illusion, it is only possibly dissociate—half explicitly to the knowing subject and half not—in all non-perceptual cognition it is felt as actually dissociate. In none of the cases, however, it is perfectly dissociate : in each case, from illusion detected as illusion to the highest form of non-perceptual cognition, it is imagined to be *perceived* and, therefore, imagined, so far, as coalescent with the thing. The thing as distinguished from the object is the independent being. In none of these cases, therefore, is there full freedom from what is non-subjective, viz. the *thing*. It is only in introspection that one experiences subjectivity in its full perfect freedom.

Whatever is true of mental states and percepts is true *mutatis mutandis* of body and bodily states.

In every case, then, object as *other than the thing* has to be understood from the subjective point of view. As so understood in the subjective attitude, its apparent objectivity is only symbolic : it is only *symbolized*, spoken of, as an object. As, now, there is continuous dissociation, i.e. continuous lack of commitment to the thing and relatively also to objects at lower levels, and as it is introspection alone which represents complete and perfect dissociation, one may say that from the point of view of this purest subjectivity there is not only no genuine thing but no object too, the thing being completely replaced by object and object being understood as only symbolic representation of subjectivity that way.

Thus, starting with the idea that man = individual self is a

novel entity involving, quite unlike other things of the world a novel feature, called freedom or dissociation from all that is object, and understanding everything that is apparently objective as only a symbolic representation of subjectivity that way, the Advaitin concludes that pure subjectivity = pure consciousness is not merely the final essence of—the genuine reality, the abiding entity behind—all that is mental and bodily, it is equally the truth of everything of the world.

D

That introspection = pure subjectivity is the final essence of all that is mental and bodily is evident from another simpler consideration. Extra-bodily things can at most be *mine*; none of them, singly or together, are ever felt as *I*. Body and its states, on the other hand, and whatever more dissociate than these are called mental—the mind and its states—are as much *mine* as also felt as *I*. Of these two, again—mineness and I-ness—I-ness is felt to be more genuine than mineness from the subjective point of view: the mineness of body and mind is related to their I-ness exactly as the in-itself-ness of an extra-bodily thing is related to its mineness. As between body (and its states) and mind, again, there is undisputed preference for I-ness in the case of mind : somehow the mental is experienced as more of the nature of *I* than the bodily. As for *I* itself, it is never experienced as *mine* but only as I, the expression 'my self' being understood exactly in the way the expression 'its identity' is understood where the identity is not different from the 'it' except verbally. Of 'mine' and 'I', now, the latter is more original and the former derived from it—anything is mine only in so far as it is related to *I*. It follows that where something is spoken of as both 'I' and 'mine', it is more *I* than mine. As extra-bodily things are never spoken of as 'I' they are not of the nature of *I*, though as related to *I* they may well be mine. So far they are independent of *I*. But not so one's body and mind and their states. As both *mine* and *I*, they are originally of the nature

of *I*, i.e, purely subject, only symbolically spoken of as objects, That extra-bodily things, just in so far as they are *mine* and not *I*, are independent need not, however, mean that they are as independent as a pan-objectivist would have them. From the humanistic point of view they too are symbolic representations of pure subjectivity. Only, the mental and the bodily constitute one type of symbolic representation and the independent thing another. To this distinction we shall very soon turn.

Most people get upset when their bank balance, very definitely *mine* to everyone of them, fails. But some people there always are who, not necessarily of defective constitution, bear the loss quietly. To bear the loss that way means they can stand aside, they can dissociate themselves, from the things they call mine. The same is true of physical injury and mental unhappiness. Most people identify themselves with their bodies and minds, so much so that they get purturbed when these are threatened. But there are some, again, who can calmly bear physical pain and some mental discomfort too. They are not necessarily of defective sensibility : it is not true that they do not have these pains and discomforts. They do have these and yet they can stand aside, i. e. dissociate themselves from these. To have these pains and discomforts means that so far they identify themselves with them, and to bear them calmly means that they so far dissociate themselves from them. Simultaneous presence of identification and dissociation is no anomaly here. The relation is precisely like one between distinguished form and the given complex from out of which the form is distinguished. We have already seen that when the form is distinguished out what remains over is not a distinct matter. What remains over is the same old homogeneous fusion that was started with. Similarly, when these people distinguish themselves, say, from mental states, they do indeed realize themselves as centres of pure subjectivity, and yet, at the same time, what remain over are the same old mental states exactly as they were experienced before the dissociation. If there was no contradic-

tion between the form being dissociated and the old situation continuing exactly as it was before, there is none such between the subjectivity dissociated and the mental states continuing as they were experienced. Just, again, as in the case of dissociation of form the old situation is, from the point of view of this form, to be understood as somehow a function of the form, as the form itself in an undistinguished fused state—that state of fusion being a function of the form itself—so is the case with mental states from the point of view of the subjectivity dissociated. The transcended mental states have now to be understood as only its *functions*—either symbolic constructions as the Advaitin would have them or transcendental will–creations as other transcendentalists claim. What is true of the relation of pure subjectivity to the mental is true *mutatis mutandis* of its relation to the bodily. As for the relation between the mental and the bodily, it too is to be understood in the language of the relation between the subjective and the non-subjective, as a shadow, so to say, of this latter relation.

Granting all this, however, one may yet ask: Wherefrom could the actual detailed objects—actual details of mental and bodily states and of percepts come? Functions of subjectivity, whether as symbolic constructions or will-creations, could at most be certain apriorities, not certainly the empirical variety one actually experiences. Transcendentalists in India, except probably the Buddhists, all hold, however, that there are more apriorities than the merely formal ones their Western couterparts have recognised. Space and time are certainly there, space standing for one aspect of body and time as of both the bodily and the mental, and there are of course logical apriorities as aspect of ideas or meanings in thought (in which, however, the Indian transcendentalists are not generally interested). In addition, however, they recognise *qualitative* apriorities like colour, taste, smell, etc. each of course *in general* only (*tanmātras*)—and also varieties of each inextricably associated with space (*Mahābhūtas*),[12] According

12 Some, of course, do not hold that *mahābhūtas* as *mahābhūtas* comprise each a group of varieties *a priori*.

to them, in other words, subjectivity is symbolizable *a priori* and in a graded order, as mental (with appropriate *a priori* varieties), bodily (with space, time and qualitative varieties), and extra-bodily (as *mahābhūtas* only[13]). Much of the so-called empirical variety thus stands covered by Indian aprioritics

There is still, however, a snag. Whatever variety is *a priori* is only a *type*, none a definite actual particular. If that be so, our *actual* experience of the *actual* world, including the bodily and the mental, is still left unaccounted for. How can pure subjectivity as the only genuine reality account for this *actual* variety ?

The simple reply to this question is that it is not a problem for transcendentalism only. It is a problem equally for pan-objectivism. The pan-objectivist too cannot answer the question: Why the actual variety in the actual world ? He too has to start with rich details as after all *given*; he can at most connect them logically through types, showing that some of these types can be understood in terms of others—in the ideal form of explanation all the types in terms of one that is considered basic. The transcendentalist has proceeded the same way. Both talk of types and both are for reduction as far as possible. For both, again, what common people take as actual is what is ultimately to be perceived, and for both there is no conceivable explanation as to why something is perceived as it is. What is perceived is by both taken as what is just given, the given being the datum for all explanation. Should anyone still insist on an explanation of the variety, it would only be from a new angle of vision—and in a new dimension altogether : the explanation would be in terms of the law of *karma* and the theory of re-birth with which we are not for the present concerned.

13 Body at one stage, which is nearer subjectivity, comprises *tanmātras* and sensations and temporality only, space not being denied, though not explicitly asserted therefore, and at a grosser stage comprises *mahābhūtas* and temporality.

The transcendentalists account for the *a priori types* of objects either in terms of symbolic construction or in those of transcendental creation. Symbolic construction is only the translation, in a *forward-looking* language, of whatever emerges in the process of graded dissociation, and that is why it is called symbolic. *Māyā* or *ajñāna* as positive is only the obverse side of the process of dissociation. Unreflective *ajñāna* is not merely non-knowledge of truth, it, at the same time, is positive knowledge of a false content which, though not till then, is known as false. Knowledge of the false as false is reflective *ajñāna*, *ajñāna* reflectively experienced as *ajñāna*, which is as much a knowledge of the false as false—here, as symbolically presented as an object—as knowledge of the truth, which latter is ultimately knowledge of pure subjectivity.

For the transcendentalists who regard the world of objects, including the mental and the bodily, as will-construction, *māyā* is the will-power, the will aspect, of pure subjectivity. More of these two concepts of *māyā* later.

CHAPTER II

THE ABSOLUTE AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS (Contd.)

A

Introspection, we have held till now, is pure subjectvity, subjectivity proper. But there is something wrong about it, even as distinguished. It is still introspection *of a mental* state. It is still compelled, as it were, to refer to a state that is an object, and so far, therefore, as not fully dissociate or free. It is not fully free for another reason also. Introspection, even of the spiritual type, is after all a temporary affair and, however prolonged, relapses every time into unreflective work-a-day life. The final essence of an individual, as completely dissociate from all that is accident, should, on the other hand, be a never-lapsing introspection that is under no compulsion to refer to a mental state.

Introspection could be prolonged, as much as one liked, through concentration on a particular state of mind, usually a cognitive one, and the chances of lapse into unreflective life could be eliminated through continuous culture of detachment, love of truth and freedom, etc. which all tend to paralyse distracting factors. But though introspection could be made permanent that way it would still remain introspection *of a mental state*, of the state, viz. which has been concentrated on. How can it get away from the need of referring and realize its pure essential being as subjectivity untarnished ?

The whole question, however, is in a way illegitimate. One who asks this question has understood introspection as only psychological. *Spiritual* introspection does not *concentrate on* a mental state as an object. It rather is intent on *withdrawing*

from[1] it. Even positive concentration on a state (or anything whatsoever) is not possible till one withdraws from its surroundings. Spiritual introspection not only withdraws from the surroundings, it seeks to withdraw even from what is left over. Withdrawal here is from the latter's presentedness, from it as an object, and the result is its liquidation into subjectivity, its reduction to the subjective act of withdrawal itself[2] and *pari passu* the understanding of it as symbolic construction. In spiritual introspection, the so-called reference to the mental state is thus self-liquidating, nullifying the content, dialectically enough, as soon as it is said to be held to. Not that there is no reference, but the reference is ever vanishing. As ever vanishing, it claims to be, at the ideal stage of perfection, really no reference at all and is, during the period of vanishing, a sort of *free* reference, resisting, as it does, any kind of compulsive entanglement in it. Its free reference to the object—here to mental states—is the same thing as its withdrawal from that, only symbolically interpreted in a forward-looking language. Spiritual introspection is never compelled to refer to any object.

This is, of course, an alternative here. The alternative is mere withdrawl, bare transcendence, without any positing of positive subjectivity, such transcendence being neither positive nor negative. Not positive because no subjectivity is posited, and not negative for the following reason.

Though it is said that the presentedness, i.e. the objectivity of mental states, is negated, what is really negated here is only the *genuineness*, the *ultimacy*, of objectivity, not that objectivity as after all there, so that what is intended is not so much negation as viewing from outside.

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1 This is a new characteristic feature of spiritual introspection not touched before.

2 In Pātañjala Yoga it is called *nirodha*, taking place at a higher level of *citta* than where *ekāgra* takes place. The conscious *samādhi* at this higher level is wholly negative, called *asamprajñāta*, as distinct from the *sàmprajñāta* at the *ekāgra* level. *Nirodha* has, by some, been called *asparśa-yoga*, Some, again, call it *apraṇidhāna-yoga*.

Another name of this viewing from outside is transcendence which is an entirely indeterminate affair, neither positive nor negative nor – one may add – both positive and negative or neither–positive–nor–negative[3], because it involves no sort of commitment at all. It is merely viewing from outside without any sticking to, any commitment to, that *outside*. This is the Mādhyamika concept of *śūnyatā*. Or – a third alternative -, the withdrawal or transcendence, even as so indeterminate, may be understood as after all a form of *consciousness*, but consciousness which, in spite of its purity, is still wholly indeterminate. This is the Yogācāra concept of *vijñaptimātratā*. Neither of these alternatives, hower, is acceptable to the Advaitin. Withdrawal, according to him, is negative attention, and all negation, he holds, presupposes, and posits also as a result, a positive as the ground. That positive ground, according to him, is pure subjectivity. Implicitly operating as the ground all through of the process of dissociation, from the extra-bodily world, through body and mind, to the stage of introspection, it evidences itself reflectively in its pure positive autonomy at this last stage. The Advaitin does not deny that lured by the successive acts of withdrawal, one might think that this withdrawal alone, whether as *śūnyatā* or as *vijñaptimātratā*, is the ultimate stand. It is just in order that one is not misled that way that between what he would call final realization and that transcendence he introduces another item for training, viz. a warning statement *(mahāvākya)* that the final truth is pure subjectivity, not merely the withdrawal nor even the withdrawing self *qua* withdrawing. It is this warning statement that occasions at the stage of final withdrawal the direct awareness of pure subjectivity. It revives the implicit ground that has so long been continuously pushed aside under the pressure of ever-growing withdrawing activity. The final withdrawal, called trancendence, is not, according to the Ad-

3 Neither-positive-nor-negative is still in the form of a possible commitment, only demanding that the indecision will ultimately be removed at a higher level.

vaitin, the final truth, for, first, substantively, it is but pure positive subjectivity, and, secondly, the final withdrawal as a process has again to be withdrawn from, this last withdrawal being absolutely non-different from that substantive pure subjectivity, being different only in name.

There is somthing novel about the warning statement too. Ordinarily, whatever knowledge we have through a *statement* is conceptional, not direct. But the warning statement in question occasions direct awareness of subjectivity. This is possible because, like statements which point to things bodily present before us, this warning statement points to the ground which has all along been present. This is the Advaita theory known as *śabdāparokṣavāda*. The Advaitin, however, would not object to other means for reviving the awareness of pure subjectivity. The warning statement is requisitioned in order to correct the Mahāyāna infatuation with bare transcendence.

Spiritual introspection as self-revealing pure subjectivity is, as we have shown, not *tied to* the mental states it refers to. Either this reference is all *pseudo* or even as reference it is free.

Even if one understands the introspection under consideration as psychological, even then its reference to the mental states introspected may not be as compulsive as that of these states to their objects. Even psychological introspection can conceivably get away from the need of referring and realize its pure being as subjectivity untarnished if it is made to concentrate on one particular mental state, viz. the conviction (reached through systematic analysis) that from out of every mental state and, therefore, from mind itself as their objective substratum introspection, which had stood so long as undistinguishedly fused there, is to get dissociated in its free subjectivity. This demand on which introspection now concentrates is undoubtedly an objective mental state, but as a *demand* for the realization of subjectivity proper it is an object that continuously dissipates itself, making room for

that subjectivity to get dissociated. The demand, in other words, is just for the objective mental state to forgo its objectivity. In so far, then, as introspection has for its object a mental state that goes on liquidating itself, it cannot be said to be *bound* by that state. In plain language, it is not so far compelled to refer. Whatever reference is there is *free* so far. So far, again, as the reference is free, so far the subjectivity of introspection is not jeopardized. Whatever of non-freedom appears to linger is evidently in the process of self-dissolution. It follows inevitably that the ultimate freedom of man lies in purest non-referring subjectivity–subjectivity which is wholly in itself

B

All difficulties are not over yet. The Advaitin insists that there is another hurdle—and a big one at that–to cross. Introspection, even of the spiritual form, is after all a subjectivity conscious of itself as an *individual*, as *I*, not as *you* or *he*. My introspection, whether spiritual or psychological, is after all my introspection, not yours or his. What I introspect, spiritually or psychologically, is a particular group of mental states which are mine only. I do not introspect your or his states, nor you or he mine. If, then, the final truth is to be pure subjectivity, it cannot be *I*-consciousness only, however reflective and dissociate that may be. There are many such centres of subjectivity each of which may claim to be the ultimate truth. Obviously, this is not the Advaita thesis. It follows that even the sense of individuality—*I*-consciousness —has to be transcended. How is this transcendence to be effected in order that one may land in some impersonal subjectivity? Normally, subjectivity is so much of the form of 'I' that if there be any that could transcend this limitation it should better be given another name. A more non-commital name is 'consciousness'. How, now, to pass from pure individual subjectivity (*jīva–sākṣin*) to impersonal consciousness?

It cannot be said that *you* and he are only objects to me quite as much as other objects and may be withdrawn from in the way they are. This cannot be said if only for the reason that in my awarness of *he* I am aware of him as a possible person, as one who, with his body and mind, *can* claim himself as an *I* exactly as I do. The only difference is that while in claiming myself as a person I understand myself essentially as *I* the pure subjectivity that is free of body (and mind), I understand *him* as a person only so far (and necessarily so) as I understand him through a body-identified, in other words, solely by means of that body and, therefore, in whatever way, though partially, with it. I am not directly aware of him as a centre of pure consciousness even implicitly as I am in my own case explicitly. I am aware of him as a centre of pure consciousness only as *he would* claim it as his *I*. As for *you*, it is only a *he* selected for my addressing, with, however, this important distinguishing feature that in my addressing you – or one of the *'he'*s as you – I feel somehow *confronting* your 'I', you as a centre of pure consciousness, directly. You and he are as much independent *subjects* as I am and should not, therefore, be understood in terms of the *I* that constitutes me as pure subjectivity. The theory known as *ekajīvavāda*[4] is unacceptable. How, now, to transcend the individuality that lingers in introspection ?

Some hold that this individuality derives ultimately from the individuality of the mind and body, called mine, and would, therefore, lapse automatically as these latter are withdrawn from. Their idea is that pure subjectivity *as such*, forming the final essence of the individual, is impersonal, though misunderstood as personal, i.e. individual, because of its undistinguished fusion with the mind and body, called mine, so that with the process of dissociation from these completed it comes to be realized as it is in itself, as free of all individuality. At the first stage, indeed, of introspection there is still some reference to mental states, but as that reference is

4 I have here touched only the central point of *ekajīvavāda*.

necessarily in the process of self-liquidation nothing more need be done if we only hold on to it. The reference in the intrinsic process of self-liquidation will eventually disappear of itself.

But this account is based on *ekajīvavāda* and stands or falls with that. As soon as you and he are recognised as independent subjects coordinate with me, *ekajīvavāda* collapses. It cannot be said that the apparent individuality of each of these subjects is eventually that of the corresponding mind and body, only wrongly attributed to them. For even if we assume that, what it would all come to is that *in each case* including the case of *I*, there is *a* non-individual pure consciousness as a final truth, and that, in turn, would mean that there are many such pure consciousnesses. True, there being no other criterion of individuality at this state, *logically* these so-called many non-individual pure consciousnesses have to be taken as one and the same. But with the Advaitin, no final judgment comes from logic. Logic has no independent say; it either only strengthens (chiefly by way of refuting contrary possibilities) what one has already experienced or proposes what one is to experience, their being in either case concrete living experience that supersedes logic. What one *is to* experience is not, again, in Advaita, just what is logically proved. It is in the minimum, what *other*s (in the Advaita fold) have already experienced (and what as so experienced have been recorded in the Scriptures), what, in other words, are livingly suggested in one's own experience and therefore demand to be livingly experienced, though after requisite discipline of mind. In the living experience known as introspection there is no living suggestion, no living demand, as to *how* the non-individual pure consciousness that I am to experience should be identical with what he or you are to experience. Rather, he and you being from the beginning experienced as distinct subjects—either distinct in themselves or distinct from me—and contrary living suggestions not forthcoming, the demand is that when the individualities of mind–

body complexes are transcended the pure consciousnesses arrived at are still each individual.

In the absence of any contrary suggestion, *I*, *you* and *he* even as pure subjectivity, are each so far individual, even though the individuality of the mind–body complex has in each case been transcended. Indian transcendentalists are mostly at one in this thesis. Only the Buddhists and *ekajīva-vadins* have disagreed. Even the *bahujīvavādi* Advaitins admit the plurality of *jīvasākṣins*. Some of these transcedentalists who believe in the plurality of pure selves—we mean the Sāṁkhya-Yoga philosophers, the Vaiṣṇavas and some Śaivas—have stopped with this plurality, never attempting their merger in a Great one; and some, like the *bahujīvavādi* Advaitins and most of the Śaivas, have advocated the merger. Though the *bahujīvavādi* Advaitins admit the plurality of *Jīva-sākṣins* they hold yet that this plurality is as transcendable as that of other things. If plurality in other cases was only a mode of symbolic representation *nāmarūpa*, so is the case here too. Even *jīvasākṣin* – and, therefore, its plurality – is a symbolic representation of one undifferenced absolute pure consciousness, and the *jīvasākṣin*, by transcending its individuality, may pass on to that. But how exactly?

C

In religious attitude man does, as a matter of fact, withdraw, or at least seeks to withdraw, from his individuality. Through whatever degree of self-abnegation he comes to be in communion with a supreme over-personal[5] self called God. This over-personal self is understood, in the minimum, as the most perfect ideal without any blemish or limitation any-

5 Over-personal in the sense that God transcends the individual *I*, *you* and *he* who are normally called persons. Otherwise, however, the God of religion is himself a person in the sense of being a unit of consciousness, though even as a unit it is limitless, *freely*, i.e. symbolically or creatively, granting unithood to individual subjects or somehow comprehending them.

where. An ideal everywhere is the *final* point to be arrived at in the line of progress one is continuously achieving. Here, in our present case, the line of progress is that of dissociation from whatever is objective - better, from whatever is symbolitically representable as construction[6] from the point of view of subjectivity. Hence its maximum is the ideally perfect blemishless subject, called God, from whose point of view even the individuality of the individual subject is a symbolic of creative representation. To whatever extent, then, in religion the individual subject negates himself to be in communion with this over-personal subject, and the important point to note is that all individual subjects agree that one and the same over-personal ideal subject[7] is the ideal for them all to be in communion with. The *ideal* for different people in the same attitude cannot differ from individual to individual, quite in the same way as the same physical world for common men does not. The ideal everywhere is a demanded existence, not what is immediately there in its actuality. It is a regulative principle, and as such it is felt as what *ought to be*, what has to be realized, either by way of making it actual through will or by way of experiencing oneself as essentially constituted by it, and in the latter case the experience in question is either one of identity—partial or complete—or some very close relation.

Two other distinctive features of religion may here be noted. The first is that in religion proper as *communion* the individual, before he comes to be in communion with God, has already, through proper discipline, experienced himself as a centre of pure subjectivity : he has already freed himself from entanglement with his mind-body complex and *a fortiriori*, through that, from the world of physical things. In other words, one who is in religious attitude proper is already at a

6 According to some transcendentalists, representable as created by (transcendental) will.

7 'Subject' here means centre or pure consciousness. God is the absolute final centre of consciousness.

much higher level than one in which an ordinary man is : he is already as free as possible. The second point to note is that religion is basically a matter of *feeling*, not of knowledge. In feeling, as distinguished from knowledge, some sense of individuality has to persist. In spite of whatever amount of self-abnegation is required for communion with God, he feels after all that it is he who is in such communion. No doubt, he feels too that he is he only so far as he depends on God, but there is no denying also that it is he who finds himself to be so dependent. Communion is basically this indetermination, this see-saw, and such indetermination is exactly what distinguishes feeling from knowledge. When angry with a person I feel him as hateful, this hatefulness is experienced to be as much an objective property of the person as alternatively my hating. In knowledge as a form of experience, on the other hand, the individual knower *I* counts for nothing : the situation there is that X is such and such, not *I know that X is such and such*. Even self-knowledge is no exception : in self-knowledge the situation is that the *I* is such and such. The so-called concomitant experience of the *I* that knows this situation—the *I* that is the so-called subject relatively to the *I* that is known—is only a misreading of the self-revelation of the latter.

Religion proper is a matter of feeling involving self-abnegation, to whatever extent, and it is appropriate to a stage of spiritual purity where exactly—to come back to our main thesis—there arose the cognitive demand for getting rid of individuality. The moral gathered is that in the cognitive attitude too individuality can be dissociated from through concentration on the *ideal* at this stage. If in religion it was communion, here it is the cognitive *discovery* of the ideal, and the ideal here is the same perfect pure consciousness which as one and the same ideal for pursuers of spiritual dissociation is the absolute truth. Since here the approach is not through feeling the truth is not God with whom one might be in communion, nor is there any see-saw of the individual seeker and

that truth. The ultimate here is the final perfect blemishless subjectivity which, after the dissociation from all that is object is complete, demands to be discovered cognitively as not only over-personal but intrinsically as *impersonal* pure consciousness constituting the truth of all that has so far been realized, viz. purest individual subjectivity. As at the ultimate stage there is no question of alternation between it and the individual that realizes it, the absolute is the only truth and the whole truth. This is knowledge-discovery of the ultimate principle, realization which, not having any emotional warmth about it, is colder no doubt, than communion, but despite that, a profoundly living experience, throbbing with all the pulses of spiritual life, and yet dignified and with all the controlled quiet of ommiscience and omnipotence. The ultimate is omniscient in the sense that everything, from the individual pure subjects to the grossest physical things of the world, is to be understood as its different symbolic representations at appropriate stages; it is omnipotent in that these symbolic representations are its own construction, it first symbolically diversifying itself into many centres of pure individual subjectivity, and then, through them, constructing their respective mind-body complexes and the world of physical things – may be, each latter through what just precedes it, may be, alternatively in other ways.

From pure individual subjectivity to this impersonal pure consciousness as absolute it is a prolonged passage consisting of grades and stages, no sudden leap. Though religion is a feeling attitude it it not, for that reason, of no relevance to the knowledge approach to the absolute. It may well constitute a stage in the passage from the pure individual subject to the absolute. *Īśvara–sāṣkin*[8]—the God of religion proper—may well be a stage between *jīva–sākṣin* and *Brahman*. But this is not necessary. The path from *jīva-sākṣin* to *Brahman* may pass through quite another stage or stages, *Īśvara–sākṣin* not coming into the picture at all.

8 Not Īśvara, as the term is ordinarily understood to be. The distinction between *Īśvara-sākṣin* and *Īśvara* will soon be worked out.

Whatever be the relevance of *Īśvara–sākṣin* for the realization of *Brahman-hood*, we may note in passing that there are two widely different concepts of God in the Advaita literature. One of these—the more important one—is that of *Īśvara–sākṣin* who, like *jīva–sākṣin*, and more perfectly than that, dissociates himself from all that is object, realizes himself as pure consciousness and has the whole world of objects as symbolic constructions. As just said, in these respects the *Īśvara*-*sākṣin* is at a stage advanced in that (*i*) for him, even the *jīva–sākṣin* is a symbolic construction, (*ii*) he is over-personal pure consciousness, one sole absolute centre of consciousness and (*iii*) ultimately he constructs the *jīva–sākṣins* symbolically and the rest of the objective world through them[9], so that the ultimate agency (of course, symbolically understood) belongs to him, not to the *jīva–śākṣins*. There are two other differences. One is that while the individual *(jīva–sākṣin)* was first aware of himself as only undistinguished from the mind–body complex (and entangled through that in the world of physical objects) and then having dissociated himself from these came to discover himself as free so far (even having been really free in spite of apparent fusion), *Īśvara–sākṣin* is not understood that way. He is somehow understood as ever free. True, he represents himself symbolically as pure individual subjects. But that representation is not the same type of construction as when an individual subject constructs (is made to construct) his own world of objects To the *Īśvara–sākṣin* individual pure subjects are not *objects*. No individual pure subject is wholly a construction. He evidences the *Īśvara–sākṣin* bodily, though as limited. The latter appears in no way as shrouded (except partially) or distorted, symbolic construction presenting the *Īśvara–sākṣin* as limited, which it is really not. The first difference, then, between the *Īśvara–sākṣin* and the *jīva–sākṣin* is that unlike the latter the former is ever free.

9 When it is a question of constructing the world that is *common to* the individual *jīvas*, it is constructed by the *Īśvara-sākṣin* through *some* specific *jīva-sākṣins*. Except these specifically few *jīva-sākṣins*; others are made to construct each his own world of objects only.

There is another difference which is more fundamental. It is that in his very act of constructing the *jīva-sākṣins* and the world of objects the *Īśvara-sākṣin* is understood equally also *as not constructing it,* understood, in other words, as enjoying his being – and that in fullest self-evidence – as just the sole solitary truth = pure impersonal consciousness, and nothing else. This is *Īśvara-sākṣin* evidencing himself as just the absolute, and for this he requires no extra labour, no extra discipline. The *jīva-sākṣin* too has, it is true, some such dual function: he constructs – rather, is made to construct – the world of objects and evidences himself at the same time as pure consciousness. But the pure consciousness as which he evidences himself is neither that *Īśvara–sākṣin* nor the impersonal absolute as they are in themselves : he evidences himself as *delimited* consciousness, as an individual subjectivity which he is. What it all means is that the *jīva–sākṣin* is still unfree in the sense that experiencing himself as limited he experiences at the same time that this limitation is a fault and experiences, therefore, a demand to dissociate himself from the fault *at some later stage of experience.* Till then the *jiva–sākṣin* does not know himself as absolute, though he knows himself very well as pure subjectivity and even as delimited pure consciousness. While, thus, all the distinction that there is between the *Īśvara-sākṣin* and Brahman is just functional, nothing ontological – the same principle alternatively experiencing itself as Brahman and the *Īśvara–sākṣin* this cannot be said of the *jīva–sākṣin.* The distinction of the *jīva-sākṣin* from the *Īśvara–sākṣin* and *a fortiriori* from Brahman is of profound ontological import.

We have given above the more important of the two senses in which the term *Ī*śvara (God) is used in the Advaita literature. The other sense is much naiver, though, strangely enough, often popular among later Vedantic scholars. In this other sense, God is what ordinary man has made of the absolute. He is how the *jīva* (not the *jīva-sākṣin*), with all his (the *jiva's*) fusion with the mind–body complex and entanglement, through that, with the world of physical things, under-

stands the absolute. It is presumed that even ordinary men, the *jivas*, are somehow dimly aware, from the beginning, of the absolute as an ideal perfection, as a dimly apprehended regulative principle, so to say, but since they themselves are in that state of fusion and entanglement – another name of which is *ajñāna* — they misrepresent it, in various forms according to the density of their individual *ajñānas*, as various deities to worship, meditate on and offer prayers to. This is God as *saguṇa Brahman* and is as much in the world of objects *(māyika–jagat)* as any other thing, though it is much superior to them in various respects. This God is as much subject to the influence of *māyā* as any other individual in the world; only, dialectically enough, verily under the influence of *māyā* it is understood as free from that influence, its freedom, in other words, being itself *māyika*, quite as much as verily under the influence of drug a man may consider himself (or others) as unlimitedly free. The other God, God as *Īśvara-sākṣin*, however, is never under the influence of *māyā*; nor like the *māyika* God does it create (re-create) the world at a point of time. The so-called creation by the *Īśvara–sākṣin* is only symbolic construction which, as symbolic, i.e. unnecessary for him — being only a sport (*līlā*) for him — is undoubtedly *māyika*, but *transparent* at the same time, as every symbolism *known as symbolism* is. The *Īśvara-sākṣin*, in other words, is not subject to *māyā*; he rather weilds it, and, therefore, weilds it freely.

It is just in order to avoid confusion of these two ideas of Gods that the more important one we have called *Īśvara-sākṣin* and the other *Īśvara*. The distinction between *Īśvara-sākṣin* and *Īśvara* parallels that between *jīva-sākṣin* and *jīva*.

Pure individual subjectivity, in order to realize itself as the *Īśvara sākṣin*, may deliberately attempt cognitive dissociation from its individuality in the way suggested above, or, alternatively, it may be made to attain that stage, once it has dissociated itself from all that is objective, through re-awakening warning statements like 'I am Brahman' and 'That thou

art '. This second procedure we have already discussed. Many of the Advaitins are for this second procedure. This second procedure is parallel to *divine grace* in religion as distinct from communion through one's own effort. But, then, just as between such grace and self-made communion there is not much of fundamental difference, the two being practically two sides of the same state of affairs, or the same state of affairs looked at from two different angles, so is the case with deliberate passing over to the *Īśvara-sākṣin* stage and being made to reach the stage through re-awakening warning statements. The former is intuition, i.e. my intuiting the truth and the latter is revelation of that truth to me. Intuition and revelation are, like communion and grace, two sides of one and the same situation. Be it noted further that intuition or revelation of the *Īśvara-sākṣin* is finally the same thing as intuition or revelation of Brahman.

At the *jīva* stage where there is little freedom from objects there is an awareness all through of other individual *jīvas*, *you* and *he*. Likewise, at the stage of *jīva-sākṣin* too—the stage of pure individual *I*-subjectivity—where there is freedom from all objects, there is the awareness of *you* and *he*, maybe with their objective sides still hanging on to them. *I*, even at this stage, is not only aware of itself as pure subjectivity, it is aware of itself as a speaker, and addresser, too and, therefore, of a *you* as a listener, and—what is equally important—of itself as being understood by that listener to be a possible 'you'—in other words, as a *he*[10]. As, however, there is no determination as to who definitely is here the *you* to be addressed, *I* is here understood as only a *possible he*, i.e. as *any* subjectivity. A definite particular X is spoken of as *any* X only when it is understood as just an instantiation of *X-ness* where *X-ness* is understood as the dominant theme. It follows that when *I* understands itself, from the point of view of a possible *you*, as a *possible he*, what it understands

10 *He*, we have already seen, is one who could be a *you*, who, in other words, is a *possible you*. *He* is the same thing as a possible *you*.

itself to be, so far, i.e. as what it *ought to be*, is *he-ness*, not this or that *he* but what could instantiate itself as any *he* whatsoever. Further, as here there is no room for abstract universal which is always adjectival, this he-ness is a universal substantive, and *he* as a universal substantive is but pure consciousness as *absolute*. It follows that as soon as *I* comes to be aware of itself as pure individual subjectivity (*jīva-sākṣin*) it is aware of itself as what also ought to be pure consciousness as absolute, as Brahman. This is the import of the *mahāvākya* '*Tat tvam asi*' ('That thou art') — 'tat' standing for *possible he* and '*tvam*' for how *I* is understood from the point of view of a possible listener. The whole statement '*Tat tvam asi*' intends that *tvam* (*I* understood as a possible *you*) is really (i.e. as what is ought to be) a possible *he*, i.e. the absolute, *tvam* shedding its *tvam*-ness, though retaining the core-character which is pure consciousness, and *tat* shedding its possibleness and yet retaining, similarly, its core-character of pure consciousness. At the *jīva-sākṣin* stage this absolute identification is felt as what *ought to be*. This ought-to-be character is understood as realizable in actuality either as many Advaitins hold, through listening to the *mahāvākya* '*Tat tvam asi*' or, as others appear to hold, through one's own further effort of concentration[11] on this *mahāvākya*.

Be it noted here that though the *jīva-sākṣin* has withdrawn himself from his body and mind this withdrawal is no physical separation yet, and, therefore, listening or concentration is not out of court at this stage. The *jīva-sākṣin* is *jīvanmukta*, retaining the mind-body complex and, through that, the world of objects, but not being in any way committed to it, being committed to only one thing, viz. itself as pure subjectivity. This non-commital retention of everything else is only another name of symbolically constructing it.

This is not, of course, the whole story of *jīvanmukti* for the account given here is true equally of *videhamukti*. The

11 Or, if one likes, negative attention.

only difference between *jīvanmukii* and *videhamukti* is that at the former stage one is still living, whereas the *jīvanmukta* attains *vīdehamukti* only after death. The *jīvanmukta* to remain living does not mean that he remains tied wholesale to his body. What it means is only that though he has attained that stage through his own effort at dissociation and though no amount of that effort has undone, because it cannot undo, his *prārabdha*—the system of those *pūrvajanmasaṁskāras* which are responsible for all his experience (except those which are due to dissociation) at the present life—he, even as *jīvanmukta* continues to have those experiences, in spite of the fact that he has learnt to keep spiritually aloof from them at the same time, much as one can keep aloof from the pain consequent upon a surgical incision even though that pain continues to be felt. There is, of course, a theory that at the stage of *videhamukti* one ceases to construct objects symbolically. We shall examine that theory in a later section.

'Tat tvam asi' is a *mahāvākya* which is to be received by the *jīva–sākṣin* from a *you*. The *mahāvākya 'Ahaṁ Brahmā'smi'* on the other hand, is not to be so received from others. It is an idea, or a re-awakening statement, that arises automatically, and either the *jiva–sākṣin* follows assiduously what is suggested by it or it directly occasions, through *śābdāparokṣa*, the realization of that Brahman.[12]

12 There may be another course of advance (even in the region of freedom) where the free *I* may have to encounter – it may be in supreme love or some such pure sentiment — free *you-s* and *he-s* and may, that way, realize a cosmic subjectivity which in no time gives way to the impersonal pure consciousness as the absolute.

CHAPTER III

SOME CLARIFICATIONS

A

A few questions need now be answered for the sake of clarification. They are :

(a) Should not subjectivity = consciousness, no matter whether pure or otherwise, belong to some substantive, some self which is subjective or conscious ?

(b) May not the so-called self to which it belongs be no other than the objective mind ?

(c) Is consciousness separable at all from mental states ? Is it by itself a distinct metaphysical entity ?

To the first question the Advaita answer would be as follows:

X could be said to belong to a substantive *Y* conceivably on two grounds : either if *Y* were capable of remaining without *X* or if it could have anything else belonging to it. But a substantive self which can remain without consciousness and is, therefore, intrinsically as dark as matter would be a useless supposition. Only a very few philosophers have admitted this, and even they have insisted more on its *capability* of remaining with consciousness than without it. As for the other alternative, viz. that it could have something else belonging to it, it may be noted that besides pure subjectivity there is no scope for anything else to belong to the so-called substantive here.[1] The Advaitin has indeed spoken of pure being and

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1 Sub-conscious (unconscious) traces belong to what we shall latter designate as objective *mind*.

Some hold, indeed, that pure sentiments like love and piety and pure moral will also belong to it. But these are either forms of pure consciousness or not. In the former case there is nothing to distinguish them from pure consciousness, once this latter is understood as self-contained : and in the latter case they belong to the objective *mind*.

pure bliss as equally the ultimate essence of man. But these are not distinct from pure subjectivity, in the sense that they are addable as coordinate factors. Subjectivity=consciousness is, for him, no mere logical or transcendental presupposition. It *exists*, so that, as in other cases of existent things, pure being (pure existence) is here too an ultimate metaphysical essence, with only this difference that, as the ultimate essence of *subjectivities* of different grades, it shows itself as non-different so far from *pure subjectivity*. *I am* is not merely *I think* but also *I exist*. Only, much as in the case of 'am' denoting thinking, here too there is no distinction between *I* and *am*. Pure consciousness and pure being are the same essence, only spoken of differently. Or, they are the same essence discovered through different alternative approaches of metaphysical dissociation.[2] Pure bliss too might, in the same manner, be extracted as the ultimate essence of every man's life and shown as non-different from pure consciousness and pure being.[3] The three being non-different, no substantive self over and above them is needed.

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2 The concepts of pure being (*sat*), pure consciousness (*cit*) and pure bliss (*ānanda*) *vis-a-vis* one another will be discussed in greater details later.

3 The Advaitins have sometimes demonstrated non-difference of pure consciousness, pure being and pure bliss from one another very ingeniously through interpreting each in terms of double negation. We need not discuss that *logical* demonstration here.

Sometimes, however, they present this double-negative interpretation in a simpler and more convincing manner. It is that the absolute is the negation of the world (including *jīvas*) which is *asat*, *acit* and *anānanda*. In other words, as *sat* it has to be understood as not-*non-sat*, as *cit* it has to be understood as not-*non-cit*, and as *ānanda* it has to be understood as not-*non-ānanda*. There is no question so far of these three double negations to be either identical with or different from one another. So far, this absolute has to be understood as just the negation of the world which they claim they have shown to be not-*sat*, not-*cit* and not-*ānanda*. As for the relation between this negative *not-world* and the positive absolute, the two are obviously the same thing, only spoken in two different ways in the *vyāvahārika* mode of speech.

Those who hold that there is a substance, called knower or agent[4], or whom consciousness can be predicated adjectivally as a feature, have understood by this substance *either* the mere *being*—the mere existence, the *that* only—of consciousness, consciousness as such being understood as the mere *what, or* itself an existent thing with its own *being*, on the one hand, and its own intrinsic nature *(svarūpa)*, on the other, as two distinct sides, consciousness forming only an *additional* character of it. In this latter alternative, consciousness, obviously, is a *contingent* character of that substance.

The Śaivas and the Śāktas in India and the Spinozists in the West advocate the former view. Many Śaivas and Śāktas have held that pure consciousness is only a function or power, and the substantive behind it is just *pure being* which weilds that function or has that power. The substantive is the *being* of that function, that which makes that function an existent affair. It follows that the function as such—the function without being, something which is a function and yet not an existent affair—is but a *power* of that substantive. But if the substance here is that which makes the power something existing and that power, *as power*, does not refer to the substance—in our present case, is without being—the two are only two aspects of one and the same situation and are, as such, like burning power and the fire that has that power, hardly two distinct ontological entities. Fire and that burning power are not merely not two physically separate entities, they are not even *distinct* conceptually, 'distinct' meaning that each is pinpointedly distinguishable, and, of course, addable to one another. Fire and burning power are neither of them definable without reference to the other. Of neither, again, can there be even a definition *by type* suggesting that in some ideal situation fire could be defined without reference to burning power and *vice versa*. Thus, there is no ground whatsoever for calling them two entities, though it is a fact at the same time that we do call them two, which means that all the distinction

4 The concept of self as agent we may have an occasion to discuss later.

there is between them is only verbal. And this is exactly what the Advaitin has claimed : all distinction between self (*ātman*) and pure consciousness (*cit*)—between knower (*jñātā*) and knowledge (*jñāna*)—is verbal.

So far as the relation between the substantive being and the functional pure consciousness is concerned, the Spinozists (and with them may be grouped some schools of Śaivism) hold the same view. They differ only with regard to the relation between consciousness (subjectivity) and objects. As distinct from most of the Indian trancendentalists, they hold that subjectivity and object, and, therefore, grades of either, are parallel functions (in Spinozistic language, attributes) of the same substantive being.

It may be noted, however, that though it is wrong to speak of a self or knower behind pure consciousness[5], such use would not be out of order if the knowledge in relation to which the self is to be called knower be only mental states *(citta-vṛttis)*, not pure consciousness. Mental states, we have seen, are not subjective in the proper sense of the term. Subjectivity proper is but pure subjectivity which, though realized first as *individual* pure subjectivity *(jīva-sākṣin)*, is really pure consciousness itself just delimited. It is to this pure consciousness as delimited that appropriate mental states—and, through them, bodily and extra-bodily affairs—stand as objects, which means that in that respect it is their subject. Pure consciousness can in this sense be called *knower*. But at the same time, and exactly in the same sense, it is its knowledge too. As, therefore, the context and the sense remain the same, it matters little whether one calls pure consciousness knower or knowledge of everything else. In any case, there is no distinction here between substance and a feature that could be predicated of it.

5 For all Indian transcendentalists pure consciousness (subjectivity) and knowledge proper are one and the same thing. Why it is so will be evident as we proceed.

Knowledge proper is pure consciousness itself. If mental states are themselves called conscious, this is a simple error. Consciousness, penultimately, is pure individual subjectivity and ultimately, it is pure consciousness. As mental states are not subjective in the proper sense of the term they are not conscious and *a fortiriori* not consciousness. Sometimes their phosphorencence passes in the name of consciousness and mostly, again, they are called conscious because from the objects at lower stages they stand dissociated and are, therefore, subjective relatively to them. But this subjectivity falls far short of pure subjectivity which is spiritual introspection (*jīva-sākṣin*). Half-dissociated mental states are miscalled knowledge,[6] first, because they are relatively subjective and secondly because they appear to refer to things called their objects. That their relative subjectivity falls far short of pure subjectivity is by now abundantly clear. But what is no less important is that it is not they as presentations which refer to things called 'their objects'. They only stand dissociated from these objects and what truly refers to these latter is introspection=pure subjectivity. Introspection refers to objects though them; at the most one can say they are the modes of this reference. One may, again, view them in a third alternative perspective. It is that, unreflectionally experienced as dissociated from objects, they are yet reflectively discovered in introspection to be as much dissociated as not, because, though they are dissociated from objects these objects are not dissociated from them. In that distant sense, to introspection mental states continue to be idenitified with, though at the same time dissociated from, objects.

No mental state as such is knowledge or a mode of consciousness. In case, however, one prefers to call it knowledge—which would indeed be a source of infinite confusion—pure subjectivity=delimited pure consciousness might in contrast be, with some justice, called knower. But that is not necessary.

6 We are here excluding those mental states which are ordinarily called feelings and volitions.

The real situation here is, as we have repeatedly shown, that mental states (particularly those which are mistakenly called knowledge) are only a kind of phosphorescent objects with which pure subjectivity is found, on reflection (i.e. in introspection), to have been *directly* fused and from which, in introspection, it is straightaway distinguished out. Considered from the point of view of pure subjectivity, they constitute the first fused stage, and that is why every mental state is discovered, in introspection,[7] as with pure subjectivity *emerging* and yet as an object and, therefore, also as a mode of reference, reference being only another name for subjectivity and object alternating indeterminately.

The controversy as to whether mental states should or should not be called knowledge (or modes of consciousness) is not one of mere use of language. The linguistic problem is undoubtedly there, but what more is there—and that is the real intention of the Indian transcendentalists[8]—is whether or not there is pure subjectivity behind mental states and what relation it bears to them.

The other group of thinkers (suggested in p. 42) who recognise a substantive self behind mental states have taken it as itself something with an intrinsic nature of its own and with consciousness as an additional contingent character. The Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika thinker and the Rāmānujist are the best exponents of this view. The former has openly admitted that all conscious states (with him there is no single *consciousness as such* except as an abstract universal, adjectival to every conscious state) are contingent, each of them occasioned at a particular point of time and enduring for a limited period.[9] For him, therefore, the substance called self is intrinsically

7 Not in unreflective experience where it stands as an *object*, though dissociated from some other object or objects.

8 When we are speaking of Indian transcedentalists, obviously we are excluding the Buddhists.

9 With further details of this limited period we need not be concerned here.

without consciousness, and we have seen that a hypothesis of this type is entirely useless. As for the Rāmānujist, he has not indeed held either that the substantive self is intrinsically without consciousness or that all consciousness is contingent. But he has distinguished between a type of consciousness which is intrinsic to the self and another which occasionally happens there and continues for a limited period of time. But this is only reminiscent of the distinction the Advaitin draws between pure subjectivity aud mental states. The Rāmānujist's intrinsic consciousness corresponds largely to the Advaitin's pure subjectivity and his contingent conscious to the latter's mental states. His only point of departure is that for him mental states are themselves states of consciousness, which, however, we have just seen, is a wrong notion. Mental states are not states of consciousness at all, whatever consciousness may be spoken of as having been there being only consciousness as undistinguishedly fused with them. The so-called contingent consciousness is not qualitatively of the same stuff with intrinsic consciousness. It is because the Rāmānujist has taken it as of the nature of consciousness that he calls it knowledge *(jñāna)* too, distinguished from intrinsic knowledge in being only attributive or secondary *(dharmabhūta-jñāna)*, intrinsic knowledge being understood as constituting the very nature *(svarūpa)* of the substantive self.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinker, otherwise, agreeing with the Rāmānujist, differs with him sharply on this last point. He would never admit any intrinsic knowledge (consciousness) belonging to a substantive self: the substantive self is, according to him, without knowledge, without consciousness. Yet, however, the difference is not as fundamental as it appears to be. For despite all else he has said he understands the substantive self as, after all, *intrinsically capable of possessing consciousness* (knowledge) and in that sense he is even prepared to call it conscious (*cetana*), At least this capability is then the *svarūpa* of that self. Further, one could doubt if there is no eternal intrinsic knowledge in at least one self, viz. God.

[Capability for X might indeed be understood positivistically as the mere fact that given that which is said to have that capability and other causal factors, X will occur. But even then the factor which is said to have that capability could not be considered merely as it is, i.e. without that capability itself as a distinctive character; for in that case there would be no reason why that factor and not any other could be responsible for the occurrence of X. The same point cannot however be urged against all the other causal factors involved. Many of these other causal factors are mere accessories, though necessary (*vide* the distinction between *nimitta* and *upādāna*), and if some of them are not mere accessories they too will have to be considered as having that *capability*, like the one which is already admitted to be so.

The way we are talking about *upādāna* is, of course, in the line of *satkāryavāda*, and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika would undoubtedly demur. But, then, his very notion of *samavāya*, may be called in question. He cannot deny that his notion of *samavāya*, at least his notion of *svarūpasambandha*, involves a paradox; only, he has been bold enough to accept the paradox as after all one that is *given*, a final inexplicability that one has to put up with. The Advaita reaction to this attitude has been recorded several times in this work.]

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika admits self as a substance behind mental states on two other grounds. They are :

(a) A group of mental states, differing from one another, are yet experienced as *mine*, i.e. somehow unified in the context of *I*. It follows that *I* here, i.e. the self, is the unifying principle, the substance.

(b) Memory—the phenomenon of remembering what was once experenced—cannot be explained unless one admits that there is a self which comprehends both this memory and that original experience.

To both the arguments, however, Advaita wouldoffer the following simple reply :

He has nothing against there being something ulterior behind mental states (including the memory and the original

experience spoken of in the second argument) somehow holding them in a unity. He would only point out that this ulterior something may well be what he calls pure individual conscious *(jiva-sākṣin)* which, again, is a delimitation of absolute pure consciousness, and with regard to neither of these is there any scope for substance-character distinction.

B

We turn now to the question (*b*) asked in p. 40. It is whether the substantive, called self, to which pure consciousness is often said to belong may not be the *mind (antaḥkaraṇa)* to which all mental states—cognitions, feelings and volitions—belong. The Advaitin would reject this possibility on the following grounds :

Like mental states, mind too, if there is any other than the mental states[10], is detected, in introspection as an *object*, and so this introspection=pure consciousness which is subjectivity *par excellence* cannot have that mind as its substratum. That which something reveals as its object is nowhere found to be its substratum. If it be objected that a transparent liquid is found to reveal a cup both as its substratum and as an object, the pertinent reply would be that it is never revealed as *its* (that liquid's) object.

Mind could somehow be called a substratum of consciousness if only the latter were understood, in the Kantian manner, as a transcendental presupposition, as an act or function—one could even say, as an overtone—which by itself is neither existent nor non-existent. In that case, whatever existence it may appear to have in common parlance could be understood as having been borrowed from mind which as an object exists. But the Advaitin, we have seen, would not regard consciousness as neither-existent-nor-non-existent.

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10 It may even be held (though the Advaitin has not done that) that there is no mind other than mental states, the unities known as 'my mental states', 'your mental states' etc. being made possible by corresponding individual pure subjectivities.

If consciousness could at all belong to a substratum, the latter would have to be itself subjective. Consciousness is subjectivity at its clearest—complete dissociation from all that is object. Consciousness, so understood, cannot be spoken of as yet belonging to an *object*. Some pan-objectivists have defined the subjective as that object which is in some unique relation to another object such that one as knowledge or knower refers to the other as known. But it is difficult to see how that improves the situation; for the whole problem is about this very relation. If in course of analysis of this relation—which precisely the Indian transcendentalists have attempted—it transpires that the subjective is subjective just in so far as it dissociates itself from some object and, therefore, cannot be related to that object except in terms of dissociation, what does the pan-objectivist gain by keeping that relation confined still to objects? The only point they appear to score is that they speak throughout in a single language— the language of object—and hold that if the subject-object relation *within the field of objects* is a paradox it is after all a paradox which is given and has, therefore, to be accommodated if even as a not further treatable paradox. This is undoubtedly a score over easy dualism. But, then, if someone, equally a lover of monocratic language, can analyse the relation further and proceeding with that analysis finds that the paradox can be removed through a total revolution, viz. by replacing the monocratic language of object by an equally monocratic language of pure subjectivity, there is no reason why this revolution should not be welcome.

Thus, if consciousness could at all belong to a substratum the latter would have to be itself also subjective. The Advaitin, however, would go further and contend that no substance other than consciousness is at all required. According to him, we have already seen, a conscious self, as so conceived, would differ only in name from pure subjectivity considered as existent (literally, pure subjectivity=pure existence).

When the Cartesians, including Spinoza—and much later,

Schelling—understood consciousness as belonging, as an attribute or aspect, to another principle called Substance or Indifference, this other principle was but *being* (existence) reified; only while the Cartesians took it as *definite* something Schelling took it as indefinite. The Advaitin would here only point out (*i*) that, metaphysically, pure being is but pure consciousness (space being an affair at a much lower level, viz. that of body long transcended), and (*ii*) that the theory of pure being as Indifference is only a re-statement of the Śaiva and Śākta position, already referred to, that *being* is the *that* aspect scarcely distinguishable from the *what*=pure consciousness.

Hegel understands pure subjectivity as after all an abstraction—though a living abstraction at that, because it can operate by itself and weave out a whole system of abstractions — but he adds that as these abstractions inevitably lack a sense of reality the whole system—which means, in effect, the basic pure subjectivity—has to concretize itself into mind and like things through dialectical amalgamation with its *other*, this *other* being nothing positive but just the self-negation of that subjectivity. Advaita would not very much question this mechanism of self-negation and dialectical amalgamation for its own theory is not altogether different. It would only point out that the Hegelian notion of concretization of the abstract is in sharp contrast to the central Advaita thesis that the reality of a thing consists just in its essence which is freed from whatever entanglement it has in other things, whether those other things are definite positives or a dark indefinite background or even the mere self-negation of that essence. Hegel insists indeed that true freedom consists in absorbing the *other* rather than escaping (getting dissociated) from it. Somehow, this is the dominant trend of Western thought. But the Advaitin would, like some present-day Existentialists, prefer to argue as follows :

(*i*) The so-called concrete freedom is not attainable unless one has first realized freedom-in-itself.

(*ii*) Otherwise, what Hegel calls concrete freedom might

in some cases be a form of entanglement which is bondage to whatever degree.

(*iii*) Once freedom-in-itself is attained there is no need for getting entangled again.

The main point of the Advaitin is that whatever of subjectivity is realized as essence, there is no need for going back to the objects got over. *If one likes* one *may* forgo this intrinsic joy of realization and turn again to objects which, along with this very temporal fact of recovering that freedom-in-itself, stand in their true colour as having been constructed or de-constructed symbolically or created or de-created through transcendental will. They may also appear as being *in the* process of construction, de-construction, creation or de-creation. The *jīvanmukta* can even go further : he may *utilize* that realized metaphysical freedom *to do good to the world*—and that, of course, in a total way unthinkable for good people who have not realized this freedom . whatever good which the *jīvanmukta* performs is a *total* good. Anyway, none of these forms of turning again to object is *necessary* for one who has realized absolute freedom. Realization of consciousness-by-itself is at least a full alternative to construction, creation and moral life, if these latter are taken to be of intrinsic worth. The Advaitin just prefers this alternative. It is because he prefers it that he preaches *no-action* too. Not indeed complete no-action before full realization of pure consciousness, but either partial no-action before that or complete no-action after that.[11] Partial no-action means that as a

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11 Of course, for the Advaitin, there is no scope for action at any level beyond *citta*, and he recommends cessation of action even at higher sub-levels of *citta*. Whatever look like *vidhis* at these higher levels and sub-levels he has explicitly called *vidhicchāyās*, and all apparent will-activities like dissociation (*vairāgya*) at these levels and sub-levels he would regard as of the essence of *knowledge*. What *we* are claiming in the text is that even if these will-activities are not translated that way, even then *no-action* would be an alternative valid doctrine, an alternative, say, to Tantra and German transcendentalism.

particular stage of subjectivity is attained we need not repeat the good actions that were needed for coming up to that stages, though other good actions are necessary for further progress along the line. Complete no-action means that with final realization of pure consciousness there need not be a turn-back to objects and, therefore, to will. It may be noted in passing that actions necessary for coming up to particular stages of subjectivity are necessary as only extrinsic means. Realization at whatever stage is *sui generis*—it is subjectivity (at the ultimate stage, consciousness) discovering itself.

The Hegelians have spoken of another type of concrete freedom. It is freedom enjoyed in all theoretical pursuit of Nature—the freedom of Science. In so far as Science is a dispassionate study it is free, and in so far as it is rich in content it is concrete—at least more concrete than the Advaitin's pure consciousness which either has no content or, at the most, looks dispassionately at one, as in introspection. The Advaitin, however, would reply that introspection's dispassionate 'looking at' is just a step for it to realize its *in-itself* and that once this in-itself is realized there is no need felt to turn outward and look at the contents once again, even to study them dispassionately. This does not, of course, prevent anyone from coming out of the shell. One may choose not to remain engrossed in the bliss of self-awareness but come out for dispassionate study, as in Science. But that, at its best, is only another alternative which the Advaitin simply does not prefer.

There is a third alternative too—one advocated by the Tāntrikas and probably also by Hegel. It is that every upward process of realization[12] of pure subjectivity is, in that very process, equally a downward free construction in knowledge and creation through will. The Advaita has no *preference* for this alternative. Regarding ultimate alternatives there is no

12 This upward process is as much of partial realization as of symbolic de-construction or de-creation.

scope for logical decision. Whatever decision one takes is either existential or pragmatic.

C

To turn now to the third question (c) asked in p. 40, as to whether consciousness is at all realizable in dissociation from mental states. Many philosophers in India and the West have denied this possibility. They cannot understand how there can be mere consciousness which is not some cognition, some feeling or will. According to them, these states are themselves modes of conscionsness, and they are modes exactly in the sense in which red, blue, yellow, etc. are modes of colour. There is no mere colour, they say, apart from these modes, and so is the case with consciousness.

The Advaitin would reply that such a thesis could at all be entertained if consciousness=subjectivity were regarded as an object—to be more precise, an objective character of mental states. But that it is not so is clear, as we have seen, from the analysis of introspection as subjectivity proper realizing itself as freed from the mental states that are introspected. The Advaitin has also shown that the apparent objectivity of these states is really either their objective phosphorescence or introspection remaining undistinguishedly fused with them.

In other ways too the Advaitin has sought to demonstrate this transcendent character of consciousness. One of these is the analysis of dreamless sleep, another of the phenomenon that we sometimes know a thing as unknown, a third the analysis of error detected as error, and so on. From the commonsense objective point of view, none of these phenomena are as intelligible as they should be, involving as they do inescapable consciousness from that standpoint, and the Advaita idea is that a correct analysis of these phenomena that could keep aloof from the contradictions would go to prove that there is consciousness dissociable, to various extents, from mental and semi-mental states. Let us see how.

On awaking from dreamless sleep I feel sure, we are told, that during the period of that sleep there was no mental state.[13] We are told also that this assurance relating directly to something that is past cannot but be a case of memory. But nothing that was not once known can possibly be remembered. It follows that the absence-of-all-mental-states that is now remembered was somehow *known* in that dreamless sleep, from which, in turn, it further follows that this *knowledge of*...could not have itself been a mental state, all mental states having been, professedly, absent then. It must have, therefore, been mere consciousness standing aside all mental states. This *knowledge of*...was but introspection, it being presumed that if introspection can reveal a positive mental state, it can also reveal the absence of all such states.

This absence as revealed in dreamless sleep is, according to the Advaitin, the primaeval object, logically the first object of introspection as its (introspection's) self-negation—a self-negation that forms at the same time a dark positive ground capable of developing, in other interests, into different stages of objectivity and also into detailed objects. Objectivity as this primary self-negation *cum* dark positive ground is precisely what is known in Advaita as *māyā*.[14]

The second phenomenon that the Advaitin analyses is what he calls 'knowledge of a thing as unknown'. Normally, when we know an object as *such and such*, some aspects of it are, *in the same cognitive situation*, implicitly admitted although they cannot be said to be known in the way one knows that object as *such and such*. The *reality* of that object, for example—meaning by that its being there (for whatever

13 The word 'mental state' is used here in a wider sense, covering sub-mental states like percept, body-sense, etc.

14 We are also told by the Advaitin that on awaking from dreamless sleep we remember another thing also. It is that there was a feeling of peace (bliss) too during the sleep. The important point to note in this connexion is that according to the Advaitin this feeling too is no mental state. Really, it is non-different from pure consciousness.

period) *prior* to the cognition—is admitted this way. It cannot be said that this prior being is not known, for it is *admitted*, however, implicitly, and admitted quite as much as the object in the form 'such and such'. Nor is that prior being perceived or remembered or inferred. Not inferred, because any such inference would presuppose its admission in some other case. It is, therefore, known *as unknown*, meaning that its knowledge is not through any mental state. In contrast, its being *now* and *such and such* may be said to be known *as known*, and the only intelligible meaning of this latter phrase is that these aspects are known as *revealed through mental states*. From this, again, it follows that there is a kind of knowledge, however mysteriously related to the object known, which is independent of mental states altogether. This precisely is the Advaitin's pure consciousness as knowledge proper which not only, as already seen, reveals mental states direct but, as just seen, somehow reveals other things too direct, i.e. without any mental state intervening as a medium.

Not only the prior being but the very being—the independence—of the objects, its thinghood, is also known in the same way, known, in other words, as unknown. Empirically, the Advaitin is not an idealist: he, like any normal man, admits the prior being and independence of the object known. He only insists that though both the object as such and such and its prior being *cum* independence are known and, therefore, undenied so far (rather asserted, as against the *Vijñānavādi* Buddhist), the two sides are known in two different ways—one known as known and the other known as unknown.

Demands too that, we have held earlier, emerge from time to time on the pathway of progressive realization of pure impersonal consciousness are known as unknown. The only difference between these and the other things known as unknown is that while demands, initially known as unknown, come later to be known as known, this cannot be said of the other things that are known as unknown. And, secondly, when the demands higher up on the path of progressive realization

come to be known, that knowledge is not mediated by mental states.

Indeed, whatever a matter of inalienable faith may be said to be known as unknown, there being on some occasions a felt need, and on some occasions none, that one should put in best efforts to make it known as known. *Inalienable* faiths are all of them of cognitive import. Non-cognitive faiths are those which are dispensable.

Questions and searches, too, are cases of knowing something as unknown, provided the questions are not silly and the searches not unregulated, i. e. unbacked by guiding hypotheses. That about which one asks a relevant question is already known, and similarly with what is seriously sought after,[15] And, yet, in either case it must at the same time be also unknown, for were it not unknown there could not be question or search at all. It cannot be said that some part or aspect of the thing was known and some other part unknown. If by that is meant that only the part which is unknown is questioned or searched after, the difficulty would be that if this part be wholly unknown there could not be question or search. Nor can it be said that this part itself is *partly* known and *partly* unknown, for the same difficulty would arise with regard to this latest unknown part. Neither, also, can it be said that the question is not about, and the search not for, any *part*, but about or for the whole thing considered as with the unknown part. True, when we ask a question[16] about a thing it stands partly known and partly unknown. But that alone does not occasion the question. The question about a certain character of a thing necessarily presuppose that the *possibility* of that character in that thing is already known, the question that is raised being about its *actuality*; and between possibility and actuality the relation is not that of a part and a whole. The content in both the cases is absolutely

15 Perheps there is not much of difference between relevant question and serious cognitive search. The Sanskrit term '*jijñāsā*' stands for both.

16. And similarly in the case of search.

the same. Further, all questions are not about whether a known thing (actually) possesses a certain character or not. Questions like 'Are you coming?' may with some effort be translated that way and questions like "What are you thinking?' may be dismissed as casual and, therefore, not serious. But what about the question 'Is there God?' or the very question itself "What about the question 'Is there God'?" The latter is, of course, a second-level question and may, like corresponding higher level questions, be dismissed as merely formal. But the question 'Is there God?' is unambiguously a first-level one and yet not about some character of a thing. Existence is no *character* of a thing; the question is clearly about the actualization of a possibility—the content remaining unchanged; which means that the content stands known. Only, when there is question it is known as unknown. The content of every question and search is thus known as unknown.

There is another case of knowing something as unknown. In the case of error detected as error, when, for example, in the rope-snake illusion the snake is now known as false and the rope as what was truly there, the snake that was perceived earlier can only be said to be what was known *as not known as unknown*. If the snake was known and was yet not real, what it all comes to is that though it as snake was known its prior being and independence were not known. Rejection now of that snake means that it is denied to have been known as unknown, though there is no denial of it having been known. Normally, when a thing is known *as real* it is known as *known as unknown*, meaning that it was not merely presented as an object but also that its prior being and independence (thinghood) were known too, and these latter, we have seen, are known as unknown. True, in normal unreflective cognition the object is not known explicitly-*as real*. It is only in contrast with illusion detected as illusion that we feel retrospectively aware that in normal unreflective knowledge we implicitly knew the reality of the object, meaning at least that its reality was not denied. Illusion unravels for the first time, the mysteries of normal unreflective cognition.

In all the cases mentioned above—from the cognition of an object as real to illusion detected as illusion—there is knowledge of something as unknown. Only, in the case of illusion detected as illusion one comes to be aware of this 'knowledge of something as unknown' through its denial. Again, as much in the cognition of an object as real as in the cognition of it as false, knowledge of X as unknown is a type of knowledge (of X) which is free from the intervention of a mental state. As knowledge in these two cases has nothing to do with a mental state, it means that what we have here as knowledge is mere consciouness. As differentiated from the pure consciousness experienced in dreamless sleep, it does indeed still refer to an object X that is known. But this reference is as free as introspection referring to a mental state. Besides, even pure consciousness as dreamless sleep is not without all reference. It refers still to the *absence* of all mental states, absence being specifically mentioned as an object.

All the cases mentioned above—from dreamless sleep to illusion detected as illusion—understood in the ordinary way people understand them, involve some basic contradictions. In dreamless sleep it is knowledge of the absence of all knowledge, in the other cases it is some form of knowledge of a thing as unknown. The only reasonable way to get rid of such contradictions is to recognise levels or types. Some present-day linguistic analysis and symbolic logicians who recognise types just for this purpose have yet understood them as only levels of *consideration* (in there terms, levels of language), intending thereby that there are no corresponding levels of realities, some realities having higher ontological status than some others. This they could not admit because, for various reasons they were committed to the empirical—the perceivable—as the only level of reality. Free from that inhibition[17], the Advaitins

17. This does not mean that transcendentalism is more naive than empiricism. In the history of philosophy, both Indian and Western,-transcendentalists and empiricists have always *argued* with one another. Even so in the present days. Only it is a matter of accident

—and, for the matter of that, Indian transcendentalists in general, and many too in ths West—understand the levels to be levels of reality too, the higher being at least more real than the lower, if not rejecting it altogether. It is more real because it is more of the essence of the lower, and essence is that which at the higher level of reflection is distinguished out and found to be such that the content at the lower level can be represented *in its terms* as a logical construction.

These transcendentalists do not deny that the levels in question are levels of consideration, but all considerations must be of *some content* taken, at least implicitly, as real, unless there are explict reasons to the contrary. The higher-level consideration is not of a mere lower-level *sentence*. The content here is what that sentence is a statement of, i.e a real; and not merely that, in consideration at the higher level the lower-level real has been transported to that higher level, having undergone necessary changes to suit that higher level. The higher-level consideration, even as referring to the lower-level real, reveals certain features of it, constituting its relative essence, which were unsuspected before and which cannot be detected by that lower level consideration. A higher level consideration is not, again, a *co-ordinate* consideration of the same content from just a different angle. For, first, it is already taken as a content of that higher-level; secondly, a different coordinate consideration does not reveal features unsuspected before; thirdly, no account of the content from the point of view of one such consideration can be translated into the language of another; and, fourthly—what is of impor-

that modern people are more favourbly disposed toward the empirical than toward the metaphysical. This may be due to the influence of Science in modern days. But even then Science and its present-day canvassers—I mean the contemporary empiricists have to settle the issue between perception (observation) and logic. One cannot serve both these masters at the same time unless one of these is somehow subordinate to the other. The qrestion of questions today is : which to be subordinated to which? The issue started from the days of Kant and remains unsolved to this date.

tance here—contradictions met with in one such consideration cannot be removed by another.

Basic contradictions met with in a first-level consideration can be removed, if at all, in another *higher-level* one, and it is removed there because the contents now is viewed in its *essential transcendent* character, the accident being viewed now as either the self-negation of that transcendent character or as its function—either symbolic construction, the essence just symbolized in the language of the accidental, or created by the essence-as-transcendental-will just to demonstrate the freedom of that essence in another fashion. If, therefore, in our present case, knowledge at the ordinary empirical level involves such basic contradiction it can be freed from that when in its essential form it is understood, at a higher-level, as non empirical, i.e. as non-mental—when, in other words, it is understood as autonomous pure consciousness. Kant's aprioritics are the appropriate *contents* of pure consciousness at different higher levels. Advaita is concerned with pure consciousness itself—either in its *free* reference at the level of (spiritual) introspection or higher up as over-personal consciousness, God, limiting itself into pure individual centres of subjectivity and symbolizing itself, through grades, into the world of objects, including mental states, or, still higher up, as the self-contained impersonal pure consciousness withdrawn into itself.

D

It must be noted, however, that ways in which the Advaitin has sought to demonstrate the separateness of consciousness, viz. through the analysis of dreamless sleep and of the cases of knowing a thing as unknown, are none of them convincing *if consciousness has not already been understood as subjective in the sense of being dissociable from mental states, and, therefore, as virtually separate from them.* There are people, for example, who hold that consciousness, even as introspection, is an object among objects, its subjectivity, like that of any

other mental state called cognition, being only a relational character explicable as its being in a cognitive situation along with another which, as in relation to it, is, *technically, its* object. Such people, unable to recognise any intrinsic subjectivity of consciousness, would interpret dreamless sleep, if there is any according to them, as only a *total blank*, not even with some consciousness of it at that stage. Awareness of this blank on awaking they would never call its memory or retrospection, but either the memory of what was just before the blank coupled with the normal experience on awaking or, in case the period of dreamless sleep is very short, that normal experience along with the *experience* that was before the blank, not the memory of that experience. The former alternative is maintained by those who hold that it is introspection which reveals an experience and the latter by those who hold that mental states are themselves self-revealing. In the former case the memory of the pre-sleep experience establishes the continuity of that experience with the post-sleep one and thereby proves the blank between the two, assuming, of course, that memory refers to the past as past and direct experience carries with it its presentness as an overtone. In the latter case, the blank period being very short, the pre-sleep experience continues with the post-sleep one and thereby exposes the blank, quite as much as two quickly successive sounds expose the aching void in between, or as a ring perceived presents the empty space it has bounded. If the gap be long, the pre-sleep experience may be taken as revived in memory. Some of these philosophers may even deny the so-called dreamless sleep altogether as a figment of imagination.

As for the so-called 'knowledg of something as unknown,' those who are not prepared to admit consciousness as subjectivity in our sense will not hesitate to interpret each of the cases mentioned differently. Reality of an object that is known, whether that reality consists in its being prior to its cognition or in its independence (thinghood), they would not,

for example, understand as itself in any way known as a separate item, but as just being a postulate of all knowledge, meaning that it consists just in *that object being known*. Reality of a thing known is, according to them, no content that is known : it is neither an immanent part of the thing known nor any content transcending it. The proposition 'An object is real' is equivalent, according to them, to 'An object is known.'

Demands (cognitive faiths) and questions too they would interpret in simpler ways. Knowledge of these is no doubt knowledge of *possibilities*, but they would not take possibility (possible object) as belonging to a *higher level*. For them, there are no levels, either of reality or even of consideration. A possible object, according to them, is only an object that is known by thought, i.e. *inferred*. If by 'actual object' is meant an object that is known directly, in perception, as present before me, now and here, a possible object, in contrast, is one that is not so known either because it is not here and now or because, though it is here and now, I fail to perceive it, and that too either because there is some additional factor – some defect or some obstruction – or because it is constitutionally unperceivable. Except for this difference, the actual and the possible have the same ontological status. There is no level-distinction anywhere, not even the level-distinction of consideration. These thinkers are not worried over basic contradictions which, others hold, have only to be got rid of by distinguishing between levels (types) of consideration (language). They entertain an interesting attitude toward such basic contradictions. They hold that though one must try one's best to get rid of contradictions, if in spite of our best efforts we, in our normal objective attitude, cannot get rid of some we have to put up with them as final inexplicabilities, as inexplicabilities which are after all given. Because of these basic paradoxes they are not prepared to give up the normal objective attitude and indulge in all sorts of mystic flights in the subjective attitude the transcendentalists recommend.

These pan-objectivists are so far well-entrenched. True, the transcendentalists have, with their distinction of levels in the subjective attitude, got rid of the basic contradictions. But if there is no justification of the distinction of levels and that subjective attitude on other independent grounds, postulation of these in deference only to these paradoxes would only be *ad hoc*. Further, these pan-objectivists have no prior idea as to what this new attitude and level-distinction are precisely and in their details.[18]

No doubt, the basic contradictions, are got rid of, as we have seen, if level-distinction is admitted. But, then, in order to dislodge these pan-objectivists from their uni-level objective standpoint we have to offer independent grounds for level-distinction and for going over to the subjective attitude. In the first two chapters of this work we have elaborated these very grounds. The Advaita rejoinders to pan-objectivism, developed in this section, are based on those independent grounds.

E

A question is often asked as to whether consciousness—at least I-consciousness, specifically—can be separated even from body. Dialectical materialists hold that all forms of consciousness are somehow linked inseparably with physiological complications, though consciousness has, according to them, a cycle of life all its own, as reflecting or reacting upon, in specific manners, bodily or extra-bodily stimuli. Others, less revolutionary, hold that at least the sense of personal identity is no other than that of the identity of body.

To the Dialectical Materialist Advaita would reply as follows:

First, Dialectical Materialism has not distinguished between pure consciousness and mental states, and, secondly, whether

18 Many of them would also dismiss the idea of 'levels of consideration (language)' on the ground that a higher-level consideration of a *sentence* of the lower-level will not really solve the paradoxes which they are meant to solve. For, the paradoxes do not concern the use of language only.

distinguished or not, consciousness has been understood throughout as an *object*, though otherwise qualitatively different. The question of linking consciousness to complications of body disappears altogether as soon as it is realized that it is subjectivity, i.e. freedom either from all that is *object* or *in itself*. As object, consciousness can at the most be understood as an adjectival fringe of a highly complicated set of matter, called body; but as soon as these fringes are found to have specific behaviours of their own, irrespective of body, they, howsoever manipulable cybernetically, appear to have attained a dignity of their own which is none other than their realization of freedom, to whatever extent, from what they are said to have originated from. Dialectical Materialists themselves have admitted this freedom. Indeed, their whole objective is to curb this freedom, to keep it confined to the interest of the matter it has originated from, to utilize it only for the well-being of matter (the material side of man), not to destroy it and degenerate into a lower level of evolution. From the point of view of genesis the concept of evolution may even connect these behaviours, through lower stages of evolution, with even microcosmic matter, but the old problem of emergent *vs* mechanical evolution remains unsolved. The inevitable logic of the theory of emergent evolution is that what emerges in a distinct, and so far *free*, form had been at the lower stage undistinguishedly fused, being distinguished out only at the higher stage. *Emergence* of X cannot be understood except as X realizing itself in freedom. Unless this is admitted there is no getting away from hiatus after hiatus, and the *unity* of matter, which these Dialectical Materialists so much bank upon, disappears.

The only claim of the Dialectical Materialists that is reasonable to a large extent is that the movements of the newly emergent consciousness, which, if left to themselves, would build novel idealistic superstructure very likely to run counter to the interest of the genuine material base, should be constantly braked and put into the service of that base. This re-

minds us of the Kantian attempt to see that reason works as 'empirically real', however 'transcendentally ideal' it may be. But the difficulty is that despite our best efforts it goes on exercising its transcendent freedom, and that in a way not always prejudicial to the real interest of matter, unless of course the interest of matter be just to deny the freedom of the transcendent. Inconscient or even half-conscient matter cannot judge what is of real interest to it. A judge must not be a party to the ongoings of what he is a judge of. All judgement has to be dispassionate, which means that the judge *qua* judge stands outside these and is free so far. True, such judges, with their active freedom, may do infinite harm, but that is because in that regard they have only the *power* of freedom, not its dispassionateness. Kant who is otherwise so much for keeping reason within empirical limits has yet contended that when it is a question of practical reason it defies that control and is yet our best friend and guide in practical life. He recommends its control only in the theoretical field of science. The only drawback of his account of theoretical reason is that he has quite dogmatically insisted on similar restriction even for other uses of theoretical reason. If the account that we have given till now of Advaita philosophy is all right—and we have tried to show that it is—the charge of dogmatism which Kant brings to bear upon philosophers known as rationalists would thus recoil on him, provided the metaphysical is understood as dealing not with pure objects (relative or absolute) but with pure consciousness (relative or absolute). Indeed, his first Critique is itself an account of the behaviours of pure theoretical reason. If he has not called that account metaphysics, this is only because these behaviours he understands as mere (transcendental) presuppositions (postulates), not as existent. But we have seen how the Advaitin would react to this position.

Pure consciousness, theoretical or practical—and in Advaita Vedanta we are concerned with theoretical pure consciouness —is thus free of all material (objective) limitation. Dialectical

Matrialists are sometimes afraid that such freedom may take a man wholly unconcerned with the world, freedom amounting only to a secluded enjoyment of its pure being. The Advaita reply to this we have already seen. One may, it is true, retire into his secluded free being, but one need not. What is more important for him is that one cannot *freely* respond to objects unless one has realized freedom in itself. Free response to the world of objects is to have it as a free construction or creation, of course, through stages. At whatever stage he is freely responsive, this is made possible by the amount of dissociation (freedom) he has attained.

As against the less revolutionary of materialists — those, viz., who hold that at least the sense of personal identity is no other than that of the identity of one's body – the Advaita reaction is simpler. Advaita would never object that the individuality of pure subjectivy (pure I-consciousness) is vitally related to that of one's body, but he will not say that it is unqualifiedly derived from that. With regard to body, the notion of individuality is ambiguous. Each body as a physical thing has its identity like any other thing of the world. But that does not make it as individual as *my body*. I cannot claim any body to be individual in the sense of its being *my body*. Individuality, in this other sense, determines whether it is my body or yours or anyone else's. Otherwise, whatever body is there could be claimed as my body. But if so much is granted it is only a small step to see that the individuality of my body is because of *I* the individual which ultimately is *I* the *jīva-sākṣin*, and similarly with your body, etc.

At the same time, however, *I* the *jīva-sākṣin* is individual so far only as it refers (freely) to the world of mentals (mind) called *mine* and through that to the body called *mine*. What it all means is that the body and the mind are as much body and mind as also mine. So far, the concepts of *I* the individual and that mind and body imply each other. When the Advaitin claims that the individuality of the individuated pure consciousness derives ultimately from that body and mind they

mean this inter-implication, with, of course, contextual emphasis on body. [Besides, mind, according to them, is a subtle (*sūkṣma*) form of body.] But logically before that, pure consciousness had had to individuate itself. Pure consciousness as the impersonal absolute has no reference (not even free reference) to that body, it being referred to only by the individuated pure conscious, the pure *I*. As, again, pure impersonal consciousness cannot individuate itself without the resulting individual referring *at the same time* freely to that body and mind, the pure *I* and that body and mind should be regarded as simultaneous developments. Only, the pure *I* is but that impersonal absolute self-delimited (self-individuated), while that mind and that body are symbolic representations of the *I*.